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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, May 21st to 23rd 2025

# REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES (COP14) TO THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION

## Introduction

1. The fourteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP14) to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the Atlantic Coast of West, Central and Southern Africa (Abidjan Convention) was held in Nouakchott, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, from May 21st to 23rd 2025. The meeting, with the theme ‘’**Towards a resilient Atlantic Coast: Enhancing cooperation for the sustainable development of marine and coastal areas and the resilience of our coastal communities**’’, was organized in compliance with Article 17 of the Abidjan Convention, which stipulates that the Contracting Parties shall convene in ordinary session every two or three years.
2. The meeting consisted of two parts :
    a) An expert segment ;
    b) A ministerial segment.

# First part : Experts segment

### I. Experts segment opening

3. The experts' segment was opened at 9:00 AM on Wednesday, May 21, 2025 by Her Excellency Ms **Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf**, Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President of the COP14 Bureau.
4. Opening statements were made by Mr **Mamadou Kane**, Executive Secretary of the Abidjan Convention and Ms **Susan Gardner**, Director of the UNEP Ecosystems Division, who acted on behalf of the Executive Director.
5. In his speech, the Executive Secretary of the Abidjan Convention recalled the theme and its importance for the Abidjan Convention region, then listed some of the support provided by the Secretariat to the Contracting Parties, in particular for i) the ratification of the Additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention, ii) the signature and ratification of the BBNJ agreement, iii) the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal agreement and, iv) initiatives to combat plastic pollution, among others. He thanked all the Abidjan Convention's partners who had worked with the Secretariat to implement the 2022-2024 work programme, in particular WAEMU, the World Bank, the European Union Commission, the PRCM, the IUCN, AU-IBAR, SST-SA, IOI-SA, CSE, ECOWAS and the FAO. He particularly thanked and congratulated the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for agreeing to host the COP14.
6. The Representative of UNEP's Executive Director, Ms **Susan Gardne**r, then mentioned the efforts of the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, which had led to the adoption of four additional protocols and the initiation of two others on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and plastic pollution. She went on to list some of the

advantages of being a Contracting Party to the Abidjan Convention, including: i) belonging to a solid collaborative platform on land-based pollution issues and trans-boundary environmental challenges, ii) having access to evidence-based international resources and training, iii) having harmonized regulations aligned with global environmental agreements and standards, and iv) having access to capacity-building for global environmental negotiations, etc. Finally, she announced that without financial resources for the running and administration of the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, UNEP would be obliged to terminate the contract of the Secretariat Staff.

7. In her opening statement, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania extended a warm welcome to all the delegations and emphasized the important role played by the Abidjan Convention in providing the Contracting Parties with relevant cooperation instruments for managing coastal and marine zone governance issues and combating the triple global crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change. She recalled the progress made by the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in terms of coastal and marine zone governance, in particular the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the last four additional protocols of the Abidjan Convention and the BBNJ agreement. She then made a strong appeal to the Contracting Parties, in view of the difficult financial situation being experienced by the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, to pay their contributions and arrears to the Trust Fund in order to give the Secretariat the means to achieve its objectives.

8. She urged the experts to scrutinize the documents submitted for their consideration during this COP14 in order to propose appropriate solutions to the environmental challenges. She wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

## II. Organizational matters

### A. Bureau election

9. The COP14 Bureau was constituted as follows:

a) Presidency : Islamic Republic of Mauritania
b) 1st Vice - President : Côte d'Ivoire
   2nd Vice - President : The Gambia
c) Rapporteurs :
   - Angola,
   - Benin,
   - Republic of Guinea.

### B. Observers' participation

10. It was agreed that all sessions of the meeting, unless otherwise decided, would be open to representatives of international, governmental and national non-governmental organizations attending the conference as accredited observers.

### C. Credentials Committee

11. A Credentials Committee was set up to verify representatives' credentials. The following countries had full credentials (Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo). Other' credentials (Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa) were not received.

### D. Adoption of the conference's rules of procedure

12. It was agreed that the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention (published as UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.14/Ref.3) would govern the conduct of business at the meeting.

### E. Adoption of the agenda

13. The provisional agenda issued under the reference UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.14/1 was adopted.

### F. Recommendations

#### A – To the Abidjan Convention Secretariat

14. To support the Contracting Parties in raising awareness, ratifying the protocols and implementing them.

15. To support the Contracting Parties in their coordinated participation in the 3rd United Nations Conference on the Oceans (UNOC3).

16. To strengthen the coordination mechanisms at Convention level, taking into account various large marine ecosystems, with a view to enhancing the Convention's dynamism.

17. To request the Secretariat to develop, in consultation with the Contracting Parties, for approval by the Bureau, a comprehensive options framework for the settlement of arrears and to further urge Contracting Parties in arrears to use this framework to communicate their preferred settlement plan to the Secretariat;

18. To request the Secretariat to prepare a progress report every six months on the progress made in the settlement of arrears by the Contracting Parties and to present it to the Bureau.

#### B - To the Abidjan Convention Contracting Parties

19. To assess the critical state of the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund as a result of the accumulated arrears of contributions from the Contracting Parties and the considerable risks that this situation poses to the operation of the Secretariat, the work programme implementation and even the very existence of the Abidjan Convention.

20. To congratulate South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Mauritania and Benin, which are making commendable efforts to honour their commitments to the Abidjan Convention, thereby supporting the implementation of the Convention's missions and objectives, and to invite the Contracting Parties not in default of their contributions to settle their arrears as soon as possible.

## III. Report by the Executive Director of the Abidjan Convention on the progress made in implementing Decisions adopted at the Thirteenth Meeting of the Contracting Parties

21. In this regard, the Abidjan Convention Executive Secretary presented the report contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.14/4.

22. He recalled progress was based on the Abidjan Convention's 5 pillars and took into account new issues that had emerged since the Convention came into being.

23. However, the financial section of the report presents a worrying picture that dangerously compromises the very existence of the Abidjan Convention because of the accumulation of arrears of contributions by the Contracting Parties to the Trust Fund.

24. Despite the financial situation of the Abidjan Convention, the 2022 - 2024 work plan has been implemented, thanks to the support of the partners.

25. The text of the amendment to the Abidjan Convention is ready for adoption so as to incorporate emerging issues.

26. Twelve parties to the Abidjan Convention have developed their action plans for implementing the four additional protocols.

27. WAEMU has adopted Community regulations to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the additional protocols to the Convention in the countries of the Union, five (05) of which are Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention;

28. Strengthening the Contracting Parties' capacities in marine planning, reporting and improving the characterization of ecological or biological areas;

29. The development of a regional framework to combat plastic pollution, which was presented at COP14;

30. The development of an additional protocol on Marine Protected Areas and critical tools for biodiversity conservation;

31. During the ensuing debate, the participants congratulated the Secretariat on the progress made in implementing the draft decisions, despite the difficult financial situation.

## IV. Executive Secretary's report on the administration and budget of the Convention's Trust Fund

32. This item was considered in light of document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.14/5 submitted by the Convention's Financial Officer. It showed that the Trust Fund was in a worrying situation, with a record level of arrears of **US$ 5,173,848.82**, representing approximately eight (08) years of the Secretariat's operations. It was proposed that, as far as possible, visits should be arranged and that the financial rules and procedures of the Abidjan Convention should be applied.

## V. Abidjan Convention 2025 - 2027 work programme and budget

33. This item was considered based on document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.14/4: Programme of Work 2025-2027. It emerged that the Programme of Work retained the five strategic axes:

- Goods and services assessment ;
- Management and prevention of degradation of marine and coastal environments
- Coordination and political and legal issues
- Communication and information technologies;
- Cross-sectoral issues and new challenges.

34. Discussions highlighted the need to strengthen mechanisms for collaboration with regional institutions and the involvement of all regions and Contracting Parties in the implementation of programmes and projects. In view of the financial difficulties, the Secretariat will have to devote more effort to mobilizing additional resources to the contributions from the Trust Fund for optimum implementation of the 2025-2027 work programme.

## VI. Thematics discussions:

### A - Ratification and implementation of the Abidjan Convention's additional protocols

35. The Abidjan Convention's Additional Protocols, adopted by the Contracting Parties in July 2019, aim to respond to increasingly pressing challenges and to take appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution as well as to sustainably manage mangrove ecosystems and marine biodiversity. The aim was also to harmonize the texts governing coastal and marine zone management in the context of regional cooperation.

36. In order to speed up the implementation of the additional protocols, the Secretariat, with the support of its technical and financial partners, organized 12 workshops bringing together national stakeholders and supported 12 Contracting Parties in drafting their national action plans for each protocol. In addition, the West African

Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) has adopted community regulations allowing the implementation of the provisions of the protocols for five Contracting Parties to the Convention pending ratification.

37. The Contracting Parties are at different stages of the ratification process. Benin, Ghana, Mauritania and Sierra Leone are well advanced in the process. Guinea, Senegal and Togo have undertaken awareness-raising activities or have already prepared an explanatory report. The other Contracting Parties are encouraged to embark on the ratification process.

**B - Signing and ratification of the BBNJ Treaty**

38. Discussions focused on the administrative, institutional and political opportunities and challenges of implementing this treaty on the high seas. Discussions were enriched by the training course organized on May 20th 2025 by the Secretariat with the support of the United Nations Division on the Law of the Sea (DOALOS) for the Convention's Focal Points and the heads of Marine Protected Areas from the different countries of the Abidjan Convention. The presentation provided a better understanding of the advantages of this agreement, as well as an analysis of the difficulties encountered at national and regional level. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat is available to support the Contracting Parties. Recommendations on strengthening national capacities were made.

**C - Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) implementation strategies**

39. The Global Biodiversity Framework has set ambitious targets for global biodiversity, marine and coastal issues. The targets relating to marine and coastal ecosystems (such as targets 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 20) are essential to achieving the objectives of the framework. However, questions remain as to the level of integration of marine and coastal issues into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and now the accomplishment and monitoring of the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Agreement relating to these marine and coastal areas in the Abidjan Convention's Contracting Parties.

40. The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal framework marks an important step in the overall process of planning, cooperation and resource mobilization to achieve targeted biodiversity conservation objectives. The parties discussed and identified the levers for seizing the opportunities offered by the global framework to achieve the targets set for 2030.

**D - Additional Protocol on Marine Protected Areas - MPAs**

41. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat presented the Additional Protocol on MPAs currently being drafted and its drafting process. A regional workshop was organized in Nouakchott from 18 to 19 May 2025. However, it should be noted that several

Contracting Parties were unable to organise their national consultation before the Nouakchott meeting. It was agreed to give the Contracting Parties until the end of December 2025 to organise consultations with the national stakeholders and send their contributions to the Secretariat so that it could subsequently convene the meeting of the plenipotentiaries.

**E - UNOC 3**

42. All the Contracting Parties to the Convention have shown their support for the negotiations and announced their participation. An appeal has been made for high-level representation among the delegations taking part and for concerted action.

43. An appeal was also made to the Contracting Parties to support the Nouakchott Declaration to be presented by the Bureau of the COP14 of the Abidjan Convention.

**F - Cooperation and partnerships with international and regional organisations**

44. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat has recognized and appreciated the role of cooperation with development partners in implementing its 2022 - 2024 work programme.

45. The representatives of AU-IBAR, UEMOA, IUCN, PRCM and the Mauritanian Youth Association were given the floor to talk about their experiences of working with the Abidjan Convention and future initiatives.

46. A call was made to strengthen this cooperation in the implementation of the 2025-2027 work programme.

**G - Presentation of the Abidjan Convention regional guidelines**

47. Three regional guidelines were presented to provide the Contracting Parties with tools to address these issues where necessary.

48. 48. In collaboration with the International Ocean Institute - Southern Africa (IOI-SA), the Abidjan Convention has developed ‘Guidelines for access, use and research of marine genetic resources in the context of the Abidjan Convention’. In view of the rich biodiversity of the coastal and marine areas of the Abidjan Convention's Contracting Parties, this guide draws attention to uses for medical or biotechnological purposes, etc., and highlights the need to conserve this rich biodiversity heritage.

49. In collaboration with the Sustainable Seas Trust (SST), the Abidjan Convention has developed the ‘Regional Framework for the Prevention and Management of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution’, which is a guidance document for the management of marine litter with an emphasis on the management of plastic waste.

50. To help the Contracting Parties that do not yet have one to draw up their national

plastic pollution management plan or update existing ones, the Abidjan Convention has made available to Contracting Parties ‘best practice guidelines for the development of national plastic pollution action plans’. The aim of these guidelines is to build the capacity of those responsible for managing plastic waste, not only in terms of the stages involved in drawing up their national plans, but also in terms of their harmonization.

**H – Plastic pollution**

51. This session was divided into two parts. It was an opportunity for the Contracting Parties to discuss the implementation of various policies on the coastal and marine zone, including the sustainable management of plastics.

52. The first part was led by three experts (Ms Janine Osborne (SST), Ms Nadia Manasfi (GIZ), Cheick Sylla, (Member of the African Group of Negotiators)) who presented the issues at stake at the meetings on INC-5.2 Plastics with Mr Ahmed Senhoury (PRCM) as moderator. They shared the expectations of the African States regarding the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee responsible for drawing up an international legally binding instrument on pollution by plastics, including in the marine environment (INC-5.2). INC-5.2 will be held from 5 to 14 August 2025 in Geneva. The session also provided an opportunity to share the work of the AMCEN in the negotiations, to discuss the challenges of the Abidjan Convention region, and to encourage the Contracting Parties to sign and ratify the future treaty.

53. The second part, chaired by Mr Abdoulaye Diagana of the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, provided an opportunity to share the experiences of Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which have action plans to reduce plastic pollution. These countries have benefited from financial and technical support from the Abidjan Convention to develop these tools. This initiative has the advantage of facilitating coordination between stakeholders and addressing all plastic management issues and limiting negative impacts.

54. These sessions highlighted and shared the key lessons learned from the Abidjan Convention's activities on the prevention and management of marine litter and plastic pollution.

**I - National Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan**

55. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat made a presentation on the preparation and submission of national reports on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Several Contracting Parties are late in producing and transmitting their national reports to the CBD. In addition, data on marine and coastal biodiversity is not always up to date. The Contracting Parties are encouraged to take steps to ensure that the reports are produced and transmitted on time. The communication provided an opportunity to share the difficulties encountered in the process of integrating marine and coastal issues into

national strategies and action plans on biodiversity, and others in updating data and producing documents regularly.

## VII. Review of draft decisions

56. The Abidjan Convention experts examined and validated eleven (11) draft decisions, which will be submitted to the Ministerial Segment for deliberation.

These are :

a) Draft Decision CP14.01: Implementation of COP13 decisions
b) Draft Decision CP14.02: Adoption of the 2025-2027 Work Programme
c) Draft Decision CP14.03: Financial Matters 2025-2027
d) Draft Decision CP14.4: Ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention
e) Draft Decision CP14.5: Ratification and Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction – BBNJ
f) Draft Decision CP14.6: Implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)
g) Draft Decision CP14.7: Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)
h) Draft Decision CP14.8: The Protocol on Marine Protected Areas and the organization of plenipotentiaries
i) Draft Decision CP14.9: Participation and Contribution of Contracting Parties to UNOC 3
j) Draft Decision CP14.10: Plastic Waste, Signature, and Ratification of the Treaty
k) Draft Decision CP14.11: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Partnerships for the Development and Implementation of New Projects

## VIII. Consideration of the draft Nouakchott Declaration on Integrated Ocean Management Policies in Africa

57. The Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention introduced the draft Nouakchott Declaration contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.14/6.

58. The draft declaration was approved without amendment.

## IX. Consideration of recommendations from the workshop and draft report of the expert segment

59. The recommendations and draft report of the expert segment were presented to the meeting for consideration. The recommendations were adopted without amendment and forwarded to the ministerial segment. The draft report was adopted with some minor amendments for inclusion in the meeting report.

## X. Closure of the expert segment

60. Following the exchange of courtesies, the expert segment was declared closed on Friday 23 May 2025.

# Second part : Ministerial segment

61. Delegations to the ministerial segment were headed by :

a) Her Excellency, Mrs MESSOUDA Baham Mohamed Laghdaf, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President of the COP14 Bureau.

b) His Excellency, Mr BOLEY SR Dweh Siehwloh, Deputy Executive Director, Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

c) His Excellency, Mr SEBASTIAO Lino Quienda Mateus, President of the Board of Directors of the Environment Fund, Representative of the Minister of Environment of Angola

d) Her Excellency, Mrs MANJANG Rohey John, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources of the Republic of The Gambia

e) Her Excellency, Mrs SOBBA-STEPHENS Mima Yema Mimi, Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Sierra Leone

f) His Excellency, Mr KOUADIO Kouakou Parfait, Chief of Staff, representing the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

g) His Excellency, Mr DIAGNE Mame Mory, Technical Adviser, Representing the Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of the Republic of Senegal

h) His Excellency, Mr Nashiru SALIFU, Deputy Director of Science, Technology and Innovation, representing the Minister of the Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) of Ghana

i) His Excellency, Mr ATAH Akpaki, Adviser to the Minister, representing the Minister of Environment of Togo

j) His Excellency, Mr EMBALO Augusto Idrissa, Minister Counsellor, representing the Minister of Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Action of Guinea-Bissau

## A. Ministerial segment opening ceremony

62. The ministerial segment opened at 10.00 AM on Friday, May 23, 2025. In accordance with the agenda, Her Excellency **Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President of the COP14 Bureau, welcomed all the delegations.

63. The opening ceremony was highlighted by speeches from the Abidjan Convention's Executive Secretary, the COP14 President's statement and statements from the Heads of Delegation.

64. In his speech, Mr **Mamadou Kane**, Executive Secretary of the Abidjan Convention, thanked His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr **Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani**, the Government of His Excellency Prime Minister **Mokhtar Ould Djay** and Her Excellency Mrs **Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President of the COP14 Bureau, for accepting to host the Abidjan Convention COP14. He highlighted the environmental challenges facing the coastal zones and oceans of

the Abidjan Convention area, and underlined the importance of the Abidjan Convention as a framework for concerted action by the Contracting Parties to find concerted solutions to these challenges. He recalled the conclusions of the closed session of the experts' segment and urged the Contracting Parties to rally around their Convention. Before closing, he thanked all the Delegations, Focal Points, Partners and stakeholders for their participation in the COP14.

65. In her speech, Her Excellency **Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President of the COP14 Bureau, expressed her warm appreciation and gratitude to all the Delegations present at COP14.

66. She stressed the importance of the Abidjan Convention, which arose from the need for the Contracting Parties to adopt a regional approach to preventing, reducing and combating pollution of the marine environment and related coastal and river waters under the jurisdiction of the States of West, Central and Southern Africa, and the need to activate the mechanisms linked to its implementation at the level of all the Contracting Parties.

67. She mentioned the importance attached by His Excellency the President of the Republic, Mr **Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani**, the Government of His Excellency Prime Minister **Mokhtar Ould Djay** and the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development to environmental issues in general, and in particular to the sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment. This justifies the acceptance to host COP14.

68. Before closing, she recalled the progress made in coastal zone management in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

69. After the opening speeches, the President of COP14 proceeded to a tour de table for the statements by the Heads of Delegation at the ministerial segment.

70. In their statements, the Heads of Delegation reviewed the progress made on the management of coastal and marine areas and thanked the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for hosting the COP14 and organising it to perfection.

### B. Functioning of the Secretariat

71. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat gave a presentation on the state of contributions from the Contracting Parties. This presentation described the bleak situation of the Trust Fund and showed the extent of the Contracting Parties' failure to contribute.

72. After the presentation, the President of the COP14 gave the floor to delegations to express their views and analyse the consequences of arrears and contributions to the Trust Fund.

73. All the delegations acknowledged the negative impact of these arrears on the operation of the Abidjan Convention Secretariat. Commitments were made

immediately by some of the Delegations; others promised to pass on the information to their Minister once back in their country. Thus :

a) Côte d'Ivoire has informed that its 2025 contribution has already been paid;
b) Mauritania has announced its 2025 contribution will be paid before the end of June 2025;
c) Benin has announced that its 2025 contribution will be paid by the end of August 2025;
d) Togo has undertaken to clear 40% of its arrears within three months;
e) Senegal has informed that arrangements will be made to clear its arrears by the end of the year;
f) Other Contracting Parties have informed that the delay in payments is due to their inability to attach the instruments of ratification to the payment file. They urged the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to help make this important document available, which would facilitate arrears settlement.

## C. Adoption of COP14 Decisions

The decisions adopted by the expert segment were read at the ministerial segment. The Delegations adopted the draft decisions subject to comments and observations being taken into account:

a. Bureau meetings are held more regularly;
b. to take desertification into account in the draft decision CP14.11 on Collaboration, cooperation and partnerships for the development and implementation of new projects in order to extend the scope of intervention to this issue, which affects some Contracting Parties, including the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

**The below decisions were adopted by the Ministerial Segment of the COP14.**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the Contracting Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West, Central, and Southern African Region (Abidjan Convention);

**Programme**

*Recalling* Decision CP13.2 approving the 2022-2024 Abidjan Convention's work programme, noting progresses in the implementation of the COP13 Decisions and the fact that most it’s Decisions are still being implemented;

*Recognizing* that we, the Contracting Parties, have a shared responsibility and concern for oceans health thus addressing emerging issues across the ocean space, including ocean governance;

*Welcoming* the progress made in implementing the decisions and programs mandated by the meetings of the Contracting Parties and the impact of the low contribution of Contracting Parties to the Trust Fund;

*Reaffirming* our political commitment to the Abidjan Convention and to making our contribution to the optimal implementation of this work programme, including the payment of contributions and multilateral financial mechanisms, which are important levers for the Abidjan Convention;

**Finance**

*Recalling* that the 2022-2024 work programme was financed by payments of statutory and voluntary contributions to the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund by the Contracting Parties and largely by contributions from partners towards the implementation of collaborative projects and activities;

Noting the need to strengthen and optimize the functions and the coordination of the Secretariat, as well as the implementation of the Abidjan Convention, its action plan, protocols and work programmes;

*Recalling* the responsibility of the Contracting Parties to ensure the funding of the Secretariat's operations through the regular payment of their contributions to the Trust Fund and the urgent need to clear the arrears;

*Recalling* the catastrophic situation of the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund for several years, which threatens the continued operation of the Secretariat and negatively impacts the implementation of the Contracting Parties' decisions and other Convention activities;

**Ratification of the Additional Protocols**

*Noting* the Secretariat’s efforts and progresses in the ratification process of (i) the Bassam Protocol on Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities, (ii) the Malabo Protocol on Environmental Standards Associated with Offshore Oil and Gas Activities, (iii) the Pointe-Noire Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and (iv) the Calabar Protocol on Sustainable Mangrove Management, and the development of the new protocol on the management of marine protected areas;

*Recalling* that the entry into force of these protocols will constitute an important step in ocean governance by providing Contracting Parties with an harmonized regional reference framework for integrated marine and coastal zone management, the fight against pollution by hydrocarbons and land-based sources, and the conservation of biodiversity on marine and coastal ecosystems in the Abidjan Convention region;

*Considering* Parties’ collective responsibility to adopt joint and individual measures to ensure effective governance of our oceans for the well-being of our people and economies;

**Signing and ratifying the BBJN Agreement**

*Recognizing* the need to respond appropriately and cooperatively to the loss of biological diversity and the degradation of ocean ecosystems, particularly due to the effects of climate change on marine ecosystems, such as ocean warming and deoxygenation, as well as ocean acidification, pollution, including plastic pollution, and unsustainable resource use;

*Desiring* to better address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;

*Aware* of the legislative, administrative, and policy challenges, capacity-building needs, and the need to establish cooperative frameworks and partnerships to fulfil their obligations under the Agreement;

**Kunming-Montreal Global Framework**

*Noting* the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the need for coordinated action by Contracting Parties to achieve its targets;

**National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans**

*Recalling* the importance for Contracting Parties to equip themselves with the essential tools for planning and effectively managing biodiversity, including in marine and coastal environments;

**Additionnal  Protocol on the Management of Marine Protected Areas**

*Considering* that marine protected areas and other conservation measures are tools for combating biodiversity loss;

*Noting* the progress made by Contracting Parties in establishing, managing and strengthening the network of marine protected areas in the Abidjan Convention region;

Recalling Decision CP13.05 requesting the Secretariat to develop a supplementary protocol for the management of marine protected areas;

*Noting* the progress made in the process of developing the draft protocol;

**Third United Nations Ocean Conference**

*Recalling* the strategic importance of the upcoming third United Nations Ocean Conference, given the opportunities it offers countries to take stock of the challenges and progress made in ocean management and to engage in new partnerships for the region;

**Plastic Pollution**

*Committing* to further address key environmental challenges facing the Abidjan Convention region, including the three global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution;

*Noting* with concern that high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution, particularly in the marine environment, represent a serious problem for the environment and human health and have a negative impact on the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development;

Further noting the progress made by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, as established by UNEP/EA.5.2/Res.14 of the United Nations Environment Assembly, towards the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment;

*Further committing* to advancing the sustainable blue economy in the Southeast Atlantic through the sustainable use of ocean resources, including by strengthening relevant frameworks, tools, and approaches such as marine and coastal spatial planning and ocean economic valuation;

**Cooperation and Partnerships**

*Welcoming* the financial and technical support provided by partners, including regional and international organizations, for the implementation of the work programme of the Abidjan Convention;

*Underscoring* the need to develop and strengthen strategic partnerships to advance the work of the Abidjan Convention, particularly in the context of the implementation of the 2025-2027 work programme;

*Appreciating* the support provided by the United Nations Environment Programme, as Secretariat of the Convention, and by partners in the implementation of the works of the Abidjan Convention, its protocols, action plans, and work programmes;

**Decide to:**

**Decision CP14.01: Implementation of COP13 decisions**

1. *Commend* the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention for its efforts in implementing the decisions of COP12 and COP13.

2. Request the Secretariat, given their importance, to continue implementing the following decisions:

- CP13.4 on the amendment of the texts of the Abidjan Convention;
- CP13.6 on the implementation of SDG 14 in the Abidjan Convention

countries
- CP13.7 on ocean acidification;
- CP13.8 on the governance of coastal and marine zones in the Abidjan Convention area;
- CP13.10 on the preparation of a report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Abidjan Convention area;
- CP13.11 on collaboration with other African Regional Seas Conventions;
- CP13.12 on the blue economy in the context of poverty reduction in Africa
- CP13.15 on Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)

**Decision CP14.02: Adoption of the 2025-2027 Work Programme**

1. *Adopt* the 2025-2027 work programme, which reflects the Contracting Parties' legitimate ambitions for the Abidjan Convention region, the theme of COP14, and the impacts on economies and human well-being;

2. *Note* that the said work programme is based on the same thematic areas as those included in the 2022-2024 work programme, namely:

a. Goods and services valuation;

b. Management and prevention of coastal and marine environments degradation

c. Coordination of political and legal issues;

d. Communication, awareness-raising, information, and education;

e. Cross-cutting and emerging issues;

3. Urge the Secretariat to optimize the work programme and relaunch the GCLME project;

4. Urge the Secretariat to pursue its collaborative efforts with partners active in the marine and coastal environment,

**Decision CP14.03: Financial Matters 2025-2027**

1. Congratulate Contracting Parties that have paid their mandatory contributions to the Trust Fund and urge all others to continue to pay their contributions on time.

2. *Appeal* to the collective and individual political responsibility of the Contracting Parties to take full ownership of the Convention and fulfil their obligations by clearing arrears and paying their contributions to the Trust Fund to enable the Secretariat to carry out its mandate and missions.

3. *Urge* the COP14 Bureau to support efforts to recover arrears in contributions to the Abidjan Convention Secretariat's Trust Fund including through diplomatic channels, and include this item on the agenda of all its meetings.

4. *Request* Contracting Parties and partners to assist the Secretariat in mobilizing resources for the 2025-2027 Work Programme implementation and other projects and activities;

5. *Request* Contracting Parties and partners in a position to do so to voluntarily make contributions to the Trust Fund to support the effective implementation of the Convention's work programme.

6. *Recommend* that the Secretariat strengthen its fundraising efforts with reference to financial rules and procedures.

**Decision CP14.4: Ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention**

*1. Felicitate* the Secretariat and its partners for organizing awareness-raising activities on the Calabar, Malabo, Bassam, and Pointe Noire Additional Protocols, and supporting certain Contracting Parties in developing action plans and the ratification process;

*2. Congratulate* the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) for adopting community regulations to accelerate the implementation of provisions of the aforementioned protocols in the WAEMU area,

*3. Urge* the Contracting Parties, in light of the challenges facing marine and coastal environments, to initiate or accelerate the ratification process for the Additional Protocols so that they can enter into force as soon as possible;

*4. Invite* the Secretariat and all technical and financial partners to support the Contracting Parties in the ratification processes and the development of programs and projects to implement the Protocols' action plans;

*5. Invite* all other regional economic organizations in the Abidjan Convention area to draw inspiration from the initiatives undertaken by WAEMU to facilitate the harmonization of coastal and marine zone management policies.

**Decision CP14.5: Ratification and Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction – BBNJ**

*1. Urge* the Contracting Parties to sign and ratify as soon as possible the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction;

*2. Request* the Secretariat, with the support of partners, to continue raising awareness among the Contracting Parties of the advantages and benefits, and facilitate the development of a vision and framework for the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement;

3. Request the Contracting Parties, with the support of the Secretariat and partners, to assess their technological capacities and needs, to support activities such as scientific research and environmental impact assessments which are essential for the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement.

**Decision CP14.6: Implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**

*1. Urge* Contracting Parties to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and regional biodiversity frameworks, as appropriate, by aligning their policies and legal instruments with the Framework, including updating their national strategies and action plans to include marine and coastal biodiversity;

*2. Request* the Convention Secretariat to initiate programs, mobilize resources, and establish partnerships to strengthen Contracting Parties' capacities and develop governance tools to fulfil their biodiversity conservation commitments and contribute to achieving the objectives of target 3 of the global biodiversity framework;

*3. Invite* Contracting Parties to consider the roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as stakeholders in biodiversity conservation.

**Decision CP14.7: Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)**

*1. Request* the Secretariat, in collaboration with the CBD, to conduct an analysis of the challenges and needs of Contracting Parties in developing and regularly submitting their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), taking into account the challenges of conserving marine and coastal biodiversity;

*2. Urge* Contracting Parties to prepare the 7th NBSAP report, integrating marine and coastal issues, and to submit it on time;

*3. Request* the Secretariat, with the support of the CBD and other partners, to support Contracting Parties in data collection and assessment processes for marine and coastal ecosystems, including biodiversity.

**Decision CP14.8: The Protocol on Marine Protected Areas and the organization of plenipotentiaries**

*1. Urge* the Contracting Parties to continue national consultations on the Additional Protocol on Marine Protected Areas submitted to the 14th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention and submit their inputs to the Secretariat by the end of December 2025 *;*

*2. Request* the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to mobilize resources and establish partnerships to develop the Action Plan, programmes for the Additional Protocol on Marine Protected Areas and organize meeting of plenipotentiaries for signature;

*3. Request* the Secretariat to initiate programs, mobilize resources, and collaborate with partners to support the efforts of the Contracting Parties to strengthen measures for the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of ecosystems.

**Decision CP14.9: Participation and Contribution of Contracting Parties to UNOC 3**

*1. Encourage* Contracting Parties to participate at a high level of representation to the third United Nations Ocean Conference;

*2. Request* Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention to endorse the Nouakchott Declaration, which will be presented at UNOC 3, as the Contracting Parties' commitment to the sustainable management of the Abidjan Convention region ;

*3. Urge* the Secretariat, with input from Contracting Parties, to use the Conference as an opportunity to mobilize partnerships for the implementation of the 2025-2027 work-plan of the Abidjan Convention.

**Decision CP14.10: Plastic Waste, Signature, and Ratification of the Treaty**

*1. Urge* the Contracting Parties to use their influence to reach an agreement at the next session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5.2) on a legally binding international instrument on plastic pollution, including the marine environment ;

*2. Commend* the Secretariat for developing a Regional Framework to Combat Marine Litter, including plastics and microplastics ;

*3. Request* the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to initiate programs, mobilize resources, and build partnerships to operationalize the Regional Framework, particularly in:

i. the prevention and management of marine litter and plastic pollution;

ii. the collection and recycling of plastic marine litters ;

iii. the finalization of the draft Supplementary Protocol on Plastic Pollution;

*4. Request* the Secretariat, in collaboration with key partners in the region, to establish a regional technical working group on marine litter and plastic pollution.

**Decision CP14.11: Collaboration, Cooperation, and Partnerships for the Development and Implementation of New Projects**

*1. Request* the Secretariat to initiate new programs, mobilize resources, and establish partnerships to leverage opportunities in financial mechanisms and agreements for the implementation of its 2025-2027 Work Programme;

*2. Urge* the Secretariat to sign Memoranda of Understanding with Community Economic Organizations within its area of coverage to position itself as a convention for the implementation of policies and strategies for the Management and Governance of Marine and Coastal Areas;

3. *Urge* the Secretariat to develop a partnership with the Benguela Current Commission.

4. *Urge* the Secretariat to collaborate with UNCCD and all organizations responsible for Desertification to take into account this problem faced by certain Contracting Parties.

## D. Adoption of Nouakchott Declaration

74. The Nouakchott Declaration was read out in plenary. It was adopted subject to the consideration of some minor contributions.

## E. Confirmation of the new COP14 Bureau

75. Following the proposal of the Expert Segment, the COP14 Bureau was presented to the Ministerial Segment which adopted it. It is constituted as follows:

a) Presidency : Islamic Republic of Mauritania
b) 1st Vice - President : Côte d'Ivoire
   2nd Vice - President : The Gambia
c) Rapporteurs :
   - Angola,
   - Benin,
   - Republic of Guinea.

## F. Date and venue of the next COP

76. No country has applied to host the next COP. The Secretariat informed that discussions are underway and well advanced with Namibia.

## G. Adoption of COP14 report

77. The Ministerial Segment has adopted the COP14 report.

## H. Closure of the Ministerial Segment

78. The closing of the ministerial segment was marked by speeches of the Abidjan Convention Executive Secretary, Mr. **Mamadou Kane** and Her Excellency Mrs. **Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Chairperson of the COP14 Bureau.

79. Mr. **Mamadou Kane**, the Abidjan Convention Executive Secretary expressed his satisfaction with the commitment of the Contracting Parties to support the 2025-2027

work programme and its implementation through the payment of contributions to the Trust Fund. He then asked for acclamations from Her Excellency Mrs. Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Chairperson of the COP14 Bureau for her leadership and the successful organization of COP14 in excellent conditions.

80. Her Excellency Mrs. **Messouda Baham Mohamed Laghdaf**, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, President of the COP14 Bureau, in her closing remarks, reaffirmed her commitment to mobilize the Contracting Parties around the Abidjan Convention.