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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

ABIDJAN CONVENTION AMENDED TEXTS

PREAMBLE

The Contracting Parties

Conscious of the environmental, economic, social, scientific, educational, recreational, and health value of the marine and coastal environment of the Atlantic Coast of West, central and southern African Region;

Mindful of reconciling the benefits of both *blue jobs* and *green economy* based on the conservation and sustainable management of the oceans for the well-being of population, socio-economic development of the Contracting Parties and the protection of the marine and coastal environment to achieve sustainable development of the region, and to ensure that the development of resources is consistent with the preservation of environmental quality in the region and the evolving principles of sound environmental management;

Considering the relevant provisions of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982) and other international conventions relating to marine and coastal environment, particularly those adopted under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme;

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 Region;

Noting also that matters relating to fisheries management are appropriately regulated by international and regional agreements specifically dealing with such issues;

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 environmental dimension integrated into the development process;

Noting the limitation scientific information on marine pollution and coastal environmental degradation and realizing the need to adopt a carefully planned programme of research and setting up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to achieve sustainable environmental development;

Considering the need for an ecosystem approach to meet the challenges of the region, as part of the achievements by environmental law as enshrined in the international Principles and Conventions adopted in Rio in 1992 and those adopted subsequently;

Concerned about the deterioration of the marine and coastal environment and in particular the degradation of coastal areas and the impacts of climate change on the marine environment as evidenced by rising sea levels, rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification or weather and climate variability affecting or likely to affect the coastal communities;

Realizing fully the need to promote a coordinated approach through international, regional and global cooperation among States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

Recognizing that sustainable development and poverty eradication are priorities to be pursued without damaging the marine and coastal environment in the region;

Further noting that, in accordance with resolution 41/11 of the United Nations General Assembly declaring the South Atlantic area as a peace zone, the protection and management of the marine environment will strengthen friendly relationships and cooperation among States in the region, especially for economic and social development, environmental protection, conservation of living resources and peace and security in the entire region;

Wishing to enhance and complement the international arrangements for the protection and management of the marine environment and coastal areas of the Western, Central and Southern Atlantic

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1 [new]

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, including estuaries, which results, or is likely to result, in such deleterious effect as harm to living resources and marine life, hazards to human health, hindrance to marine activities, including fishing and other legitimate uses of the sea, impairment of quality for use of seawater and reduction of amenities.
2. "Organization" means the bureau of the Secretariat charged with the responsibility to oversee the functioning of the Secretariat and the implementation of elaborated protocols in accordance with Article 19 of this Convention.
3. The term "coastal area" refers to the geomorphologic area either side of the seashore where the interaction occurs between the marine and the terrestrial part through ecological systems and complex resource systems including biotic and abiotic components coexisting and interacting with human communities and relevant socio-economic activities.
4. "Coastal erosion" means the gradual destruction of the land by the sea.
5. a) Dumping" refers to:
 - (i) any deliberate disposal of wastes or other matter from vessels, aircraft, platforms or other structures at sea.
 - (ii) any deliberate disposal at sea of vessels, aircraft, platforms or other structures;
- b) Dumping" does not include:
 - (iii) the disposal of wastes or other matter directly or indirectly during the normal operations of vessels, aircraft, platforms or other structures at sea and their equipment, with the exception of wastes or other matter carried by or to vessels, aircraft, platforms or other structures at sea, operating for the elimination of such matter or derived from the treatment of such wastes or other matter on board these vessels, aircraft, platforms or structures.
 - (iv) Placement of matter for a purpose other than the mere disposal thereof, provided that such placement does not contradict the purpose of the Convention.
6. "Marine and coastal biodiversity" refers to the variability among living organisms of marine and coastal ecosystems and the ecological complexes which they are part to; this includes diversity within and between species and ecosystems.
7. "Ballast water" stands for water and suspended matter taken on board a ship to control trim, list, draught, keel or stresses.

Purpose

1. "This Convention shall in accordance with its relevant provisions engage the Contracting Parties to cooperate closely in the protection, integrated management and development of the marine and coastal environment in the Western, Central and Southern Africa region.
2. In this regard, Contracting Parties shall adopt common rules in order to promote the environmental, economic and social well-being of Member States.

3. Under the provisions of above paragraph, the Contracting Parties may enter into bilateral or multilateral agreements, including regional or sub-regional agreements, for the protection of the marine and coastal environment of the West, Central and Southern African Region, provided that such agreements are consistent with the Abidjan Convention and in conformity with international law (UNCLOS). Copies of such agreements shall be deposited to the concerned with Organization and through the organization communicate to all Contracting Parties.

Article 2 [former Article 1]

Geographical Scope

1. This Convention shall cover the marine and coastal environment, coastal zones and related inland waters and drainage basins falling within the sovereignty or jurisdiction of *Member States* which have become Contracting Parties to this Convention in accordance with Article 33 and paragraph 1 of Article 34 (the corresponding area being hereinafter called «the Convention Area”).
2. *This Convention shall also apply to regional economic integration organizations that became Parties to the Convention and at least one of its protocols, in accordance with Articles 32 to 35.*
3. Protocols to this Convention may have more extensive than [or different] that the Convention geographical scope.

Article 3 [new]

General Principles

In order to protect the environment and contribute to sustainable development of the Convention area, the Contracting Parties shall ensure compliance with the following principles:

- a. Precautionary principle;
- b. Prevention principle;
- c. Principle of Beneficiary;
- d. Principle of Cooperation;
- e. Right to information, participation and access to justice;
- f. polluter-pays principle;
- g. Ecosystem-based management principle.

Article 4

General Obligations

1. Pursuant to Article 192 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, States shall commit themselves, within their jurisdiction, to protect the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.
2. 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 physical alteration and habitat degradation of the Convention area and to protect and enhance the marine and coastal environment in this area for sustainable development.
3. The Contracting Parties shall co-operate with the competent international, regional and sub-regional organizations to establish and adopt recommended practices, procedures and measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution physical alteration and habitat degradation 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.

4. In taking measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution physical alteration and habitat degradation 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.
5. Nothing in this Convention shall prevent the adoption by States Parties of further protective measures.

Article 5

Pollution from Ships

The Contracting Parties acting as a Flag State, Coastal State or Port State 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.

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 [new]

Ballast Water

The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through the control and management of ballast water and sediments from ships.

Article 8 [former Article 7]

Pollution from land-based sources and activities

1. *The Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and to the fullest extent possible, control pollution from land-based sources and activities of the Convention area and to develop and implement plans for the reduction and gradual control of land-based substances that are toxic, persistent and liable to bioaccumulation. These measures shall apply to:*

a) pollution from land-based sources from the territories of the Contracting Parties and feeding into the sea, directly by the sea outfalls or deposit made or spills on or from it, or indirectly through rivers, canals or other watercourses, including underground watercourses or runoffs;

b) pollution from land-based sources carried by the atmosphere.

2. *The Contracting Parties shall cooperate with the competent regional, sub -regional and international authorities in order to ensure effective implementation of the said measures. The Contracting Parties shall not cause direct or indirect transfer of damage or hazards from one area to another and not to replace one type of pollution by another and shall take measures to prevent mitigate and combat pollution from land-based sources activities of the Convention area or any related protocols and to prevent best environmental practice.*

Article 9 [former Article 8]

Pollution from activities related to the exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf, the seabed and its subsoil

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.

Article 10 [former Article 9]

Pollution from or through the atmosphere

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

Article 11 [former Article 12]

Cooperation in combating pollution in cases of emergency

- 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.
- 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.

Article 12 [former Article 10]

Coastal Erosion

1. As part of an integrated coastal area management, the Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control the negative impact of coastal erosion of the Convention area and maintain or restore the natural capacity of the coast to adapt to changes, including those caused by rising sea level.
2. The Contracting Parties, when considering new activities and structures in the coastal area, including marine structures and coastal defense works, take particular account of their negative effects on coastal erosion and the direct and indirect costs that may arise. With regard to existing activities and structures, the Contracting Parties shall take measures to mitigate the effects on coastal erosion.

Article 13 [former Article 11]

Conservation and management of marine and coastal biodiversity

1. The Contracting Parties shall individually or jointly take appropriate measures to protect and preserve the biodiversity, rare or vulnerable ecosystems and species of fauna and flora that are rare, threatened or endangered and their habitats of the Convention area.
2. The Contracting Parties shall establish protected areas under their jurisdiction such as Marine Protected Areas, parks and reserves, if necessary regulating and prohibiting any activity likely to have adverse effects on species, ecosystems or living processes that these areas are supposed to protect. *In areas beyond national jurisdiction, subject to the rules of international law, the Contracting Parties shall, in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity, take stock of the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSA).*

3. The establishment of such areas shall not affect the rights of other Contracting Parties or those of third States, including other legitimate uses of the sea.
4. The Contracting Parties shall take the necessary measures to ensure that human activities under their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to biological diversity and related activities, including fishing, aquaculture, tourism and recreation.
5. The Contracting Parties shall individually or jointly take appropriate measures to protect, conserve, rehabilitate and manage fishery resources including the adoption of legal instruments banning harmful fishing practices, and sustainable fisheries management plans and aquaculture.
6. The Contracting Parties shall pay particular attention to the protection, conservation and rational use of living resources of the sea. They shall take appropriate measures based on the ecosystem approach and on the best available scientific evidence to ensure conservation, restoration and sustainable use of living resources of the sea to meet human nutritional needs and socio-economic development objectives.

Article 14 [new]

Cooperation in fisheries

- 1. Contracting Parties shall strengthen their cooperation and coordination of actions with International and regional fisheries organization whose areas of expertise overlap with or are adjacent to those of the Convention*
- 2. If the Contracting Parties desire that action be taken in this direction, they shall request the assistance of the relevant authority or international or regional agency with jurisdiction in the matter. Where action by Contracting Parties to the Convention is desirable to complement or enhance the action of competent authorities or organizations, the Contracting Parties shall endeavor to cooperate with them.*
- 3. Cooperation on fisheries can be achieved through:*
 - i) The systematic exploration of the various areas of cooperation in the areas of the marine environment, policies, regulations, ecosystem approach, data collection, sharing and exchange of information, capacity building and other issues of common interest;*
 - ii) conclusion of memoranda of understanding;*
- 4. The Contracting Parties shall endeavor to become members of relevant regional fisheries organizations and establish appropriate mechanisms for cooperation.*

Article 15 [former Article 14]

Environmental Assessment

1. The Contracting Parties shall incorporate as necessary in their national legislation requirement for environmental assessments, including those strategic, provisions taking into account the particular sensitivity of the coastal and marine environment in order to contribute to achieving the objectives of this Convention and its related protocols.
2. The Contracting Parties shall cooperate and consult to assess transboundary environmental impacts to the marine and coastal environment.
3. The Contracting Parties shall develop procedures to publicize the environmental impact studies that may affect the marine and coastal environment.

Article 16 [former Article 14]

Scientific and technical cooperation

1. A Committee for Science and Technology was established to provide if necessary to the Conference of Parties and where appropriate, to its other subsidiary bodies with timely information and guidance on scientific and technical aspects relating to the purpose of the present Convention.
2. Under the Committee on Science and Technology, 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.
3. In addition, the Contracting Parties shall develop and co-ordinate national research and monitoring programmes concerning all types of pollution marine and coastal degradation in the Convention area and shall establish, in co-operation with competent international and regional organizations, a regional network of national research centers and institutions to ensure compatible results. The Contracting Parties shall endeavor to participate in international arrangements for pollution marine and coastal degradation, research and monitoring in areas beyond their national jurisdiction.
4. 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.

Article 17 [former 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.

Without prejudice to the application of the above provision, the Contracting Parties shall coordinate their efforts to ensure the implementation of liability rules as stated in the relevant Conventions of the International Maritime Organization in particular those relating to the civil Liability for oil pollution damage and their compensation.

Article 18 [former Article 16]

Institutional Arrangements

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

- i) To prepare and convene the meetings of Contracting Parties and conferences provided for in Articles 20 and 24;
- ii) To transmit to the Contracting Parties notifications, reports and other information received in accordance with articles 3, 12, and 23;
- 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 coordinate the implementation of cooperative activities agreed upon by the meetings of Contracting Parties and conferences provided for in Article 20;
- vi) To organize meetings of the National Focal Points;

- vii) To enter into such administrative arrangements as may be required for the effective discharge of the Secretariat functions;
- viii) To enhance the financial resource mobilization as well as the relationships with bilateral and multilateral donors in the framework of the action plan for sustainable development of coastal and marine environment;
- ix) To strengthen regional cooperation with other major projects and initiatives in the protection and development of coastal and marine environment;
- x) To establish and develop close cooperation with institutions of LMEs created outside the framework of the Abidjan Convention;
- xi) To coordinate the activities of the regional Centers where they exist;
- iv) To perform any other function assigned to it by the Contracting Parties.

Article 19 [former article 17]

Meetings of the Contracting Parties

1. The Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention shall convene meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The Contracting Parties to one of the protocols of the Convention shall hold meetings of the Parties to the Protocol.
2. Ordinary Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Convention are held at least years. Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention re held at any time if deemed necessary by the Conference or at the written request of a Contracting Party, provided that it is supported by at least one third of the other Contracting Parties within six months of its submission to the Parties by the secretariat. Each Contracting Party shall have one vote.
3. The meetings of the Contracting Parties are intended to ensure the implementation of this Convention and its protocols *thereto*:
 - i) To take the decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention;
 - ii) To establish such subsidiary bodies other than those established by this Convention which it considers necessary for the implementation of the Convention;
 - iii) To consider the reports submitted by the Contracting Parties in accordance with Article 23;
 - iv) To adopt, review and amend as appropriate in accordance with Article 29, annexes to this Convention and the Protocols thereto;
 - v) 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 24 and 25;
 - vi) To establish working groups as required to consider any matters concerning this Convention and its related protocols and annexes;
 - vii) To review the pollution control measures and the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity of the Convention area;
 - viii) To consider and adopt regular reporting on the implementation of the Convention's activities and its protocols;
 - ix) 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;

- x) To consider and undertake any additional action that may be required for the achievement of the purposes of this Convention and its related protocols.
4. Any such a body or agency technically qualified in the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment may inform the Secretariat at least three months before the meeting of the Conference of the Parties or any of its subsidiary bodies of their intention to be represented at the meeting as observers. They shall be admitted unless at least one month before the meeting unless one third of the Contracting Parties expresses its objection to the Secretariat

Article 20 [new]

Subsidiary Bodies

1. A Committee on Science and Technology, a Reporting and Compliance Committee and a Communication, Education and Awareness Committee are established.
2. The Committee on Science and Technology is responsible for providing scientific and technical advice to the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other organs of the Convention on information and advice on scientific and technological issues of the Convention.
3. The Reporting and Compliance Committee is entrusted to study on behalf of the Conference of the Parties national periodic reports by the Contracting Parties in order to assess the implementation of obligations under the present Convention and propose to the Conference all appropriate measures to stop the non-compliance with these obligations. In this context, the Parties shall cooperate to develop procedures for the COP to be able to sanction for non-compliance with the Convention.
4. The Committee on communication, education and awareness is responsible for all activities related to enhancing the visibility of the Convention, promoting education and public awareness on issues relating to the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment in the Convention area.

Article 21 [new]

National implementation

1. In implementing this Convention and the Protocols thereto, the Contracting Parties are:
 - a) To adopt time-bound programmes and measures where appropriate for their implementation;
 - b) To use the best available techniques and best environmental practices and promote access to environmentally sound technologies and their transfer including clean production technologies while taking into account social, economic and technological conditions.
2. To enable proper implementation of this Convention and its Protocols, each Contracting Party shall designate a national Focal Point for liaison with the Secretariat on technical and scientific aspects of the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols as well as disseminate information at the national, regional and local level. Focal Points shall meet periodically to carry out functions under this Convention and its Protocols.
3. For the purposes of effective national implementation of the Convention, each Contracting Party shall establish a National implementation Committee composed of the relevant national and local government agencies, and representatives of civil society including non-governmental organizations. The National Focal Point shall serve as rapporteur of the Committee.

Article 22

Reporting

1. The Contracting Parties shall transmit to the Secretariat which shall transmit to the Reporting and Compliance Committee for consideration periodic reports on the measures adopted under this Convention and protocols to which they are parties. The form and frequency of the reports shall be determined at the meetings of the Contracting Parties.
2. Reports shall indicate where appropriate the factors and challenges affecting the implementation of the provisions of this Convention and its Protocols.

Article 23 [former Article 18]

Adoption of the Additional Protocols

1. The Contracting Parties, at a conference of plenipotentiaries, may adopt additional protocols to this Convention.
2. 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.
3. Pending the entry into force of this Convention, the Convention Secretariat may, after consulting with the signatories to this Convention, convene a conference of plenipotentiaries for the purpose of adopting additional protocols.

Article 24 [former Article 19]

Amendments to the Convention and Protocols

1. 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 the Bureau of the Convention.
2. 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 25

Relationship between the Convention and its Related Protocols

1. No State *or regional economic integration organization* may become a Contracting Party to this Convention unless it becomes at the same time a Contracting Party to at least one protocol.
2. No State *or regional economic integration organization* may become a Contracting Party to a protocol unless it is, or becomes at the same time, a Contracting Party to this Convention.
3. Any protocol to this Convention shall be binding only on the Contracting Parties to the protocol in question.
4. Decisions concerning any protocol pursuant to articles 20, 25 and 29 of this Convention shall be taken only by the Parties to the protocol concerned.

Article 26 [new]

Relationships between the Convention and other instruments and processes

1. In view of the common objectives pursued by the Convention and institutions of large marine ecosystems of Benguela , Guinea and the Canary currents, this Agreement stands as the platform for implementation of respective activities and the appropriate framework for closer institutional ties.

2. The Contracting Parties shall strengthen, in this regard, cooperation with those institutions, establishing key partnerships, adopting MoUs, Protocols or any other appropriate instrument to carry out their activities in a common legal framework, consistent with the Abuja Convention Declaration, Osu declaration of 2010 and the Abidjan Convention of 2012. Based on Decision of COP11, it is imperative therefore that the Abidjan Convention Secretariat establish a permanent Commission on the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME).
3. For effective implementation of the Convention, the Contracting Parties shall strengthen partnerships and institutional mechanisms for coordination between the Convention and international and regional organizations with which they develop working relationships. In this respect, they shall encourage South-South cooperation.
4. The Contracting Parties shall strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones and encourage civil society and private sector participation in the Convention, in particular through formal structures. The Contracting Parties shall promote horizontal cooperation among all the regional seas conventions, major multilateral environmental agreements and other conventions and programmes related to global and regional marine and coastal environments.
5. The Contracting Parties shall establish regular contacts between the Committees on Science and Technology of the Convention and the Committees on Science and Technology of other Conventions.

Article 27 [former Article 21]

Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules

1. The Contracting Parties shall adopt rules of procedure for their meetings and conferences envisaged in Articles 20 and 24 above.
2. The Contracting Parties shall adopt financial rules, prepared in consultation with the Organization, to determine, in particular, their financial participation.

Article 28 [former Article 20]

Annexes and Amendments to Annexes

1. Annexes to this Convention or to any of its protocols shall form an integral part of the Convention or such protocol.
2. Except as may be otherwise provided in any protocol, the procedure foreseen in article 25 shall apply to the adoption and entry into force of any amendments to annexes to this Convention or to any protocol.

Article 29 [former Article 24]

Settlement of Disputes

1. 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
2. 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 30 [former Article 3]

Various Provisions

Nothing in this Convention shall prejudice the rights and obligations of the States under the law of the sea (UNCLOS).

Article 31 [former Article 26]

Signature

1. This Convention and at least one of its Protocols shall be opened, in accordance with Article 26, signed in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 03.23.1981 to 22.06.1981, to coastal State of the Atlantic West, Central and Southern African countries.
2. This Convention and at least one of its protocols shall be opened, in accordance with Article 26, signed in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 03.23.1981 to 22.06.1981 to any organization regional economic integration organization exercising jurisdiction in the fields covered by the Convention and its Protocols and of which at least one Member State is a State in the Convention area, provided that such regional organization was invited to participate in the Conference of Plenipotentiaries.

Article 32 [former Article 27]

Ratification, Acceptance and Approval

This Convention and any protocol thereto shall be subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification, shall be deposited with the Government of Cote d'Ivoire which will assume the functions of Depositary.

Article 33 [former Article 28]

Accession

1. As from *23 June 1981*, this Convention and at least one of its protocols shall be opened, in accordance with Article 26, to the accession by the States referred to in Article 32 which have not become Contracting Parties to the Convention.
2. After the entry into force of this Convention and any Protocol thereto, any State other than those referred to in paragraph 1 above, or any other regional organization exercising jurisdiction in the fields covered by the Convention and its protocols may accede to the Convention and any protocol thereto with the consent of the Conference of Parties subject to prior approval by three-quarters of the Contracting Parties.
3. Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Depositary.

Article 34 [former Article 29]

Entry into force

The Convention and any of its protocols shall enter into force on the sixtieth day following the date of deposit of at least sixth instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval of such Convention and at least one protocol. It also comes into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit of instruments of accession.

Article 35 [former Article 30]

Withdrawal

1. Any time after expiry of a three year period from the date of entry into force of this Convention, any Contracting Party may withdraw from this Convention by giving written notification of withdrawal.
2. Withdrawal shall take effect one year after the date on which notification of withdrawal is received by the Depositary.
3. Any Contracting Party which withdraws from this Convention shall be considered as also having withdrawn from any protocol to which it was a Party.
4. 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 36 [former Article 31]

Depositary

1. The original of this Convention and of any Protocol thereto shall be deposited with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the Depositary of the Convention, who shall send certified copies to the Contracting Parties, the African Union, the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration and publication in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. The Depositary shall inform the Contracting Parties, any other Party referred to in Article 32 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 32, 33 and 34;
 - ii) Of the date on which the Convention and any protocol will come into force in accordance with the provisions of Article 35;
 - iii) Of notifications of withdrawal made in accordance with Article 36;
 - 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.
 - v) Of the adoption of new annexes and of the amendment of any annex.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorized by their respective Governments, have signed this Convention.

Done at Abidjan on this *twenty-third day of March one thousand nine hundred and eighty-one* in a single copy in the English and French, the two texts being equally authentic.