

**Report of the Meeting of Regional Economic Communities and Commissions on Development of an
Ocean Governance Strategy for the Western Indian Ocean Region**

26 April 2021

1500 – 1700 EAT

Virtual Meeting

Welcome and opening remarks

The meeting was called to order at 1500 hrs on 26 April 2021 by Mr Dixon Waruinge, the Head of Nairobi Convention Secretariat. Mr Waruinge welcomed the participants highlighting that the meeting had been organised to further the discussion on developing a Regional Ocean Governance Strategy for the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Commissions which was initiated in 2019. He highlighted that a discussion paper on Ocean Governance in the WIO region had been developed. He mentioned that the process had received additional support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through the Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI), a partnership project with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat.

Mr Waruinge highlighted the Ocean Governance Strategy will be developed for and must be owned by the Governments of the WIO region. He mentioned that the process and discussion must be anchored at the highest level possible since the strategy will cut across many jurisdictions, disciplines and stakeholders, and in this context, the discussion is anchored at the African Union (AU). He recognised that the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are the implementing arms of the AU hence must be involved in the discussion. He highlighted that the role of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat is to facilitate the dialogue.

Mr Waruinge highlighted that Ocean Governance covers a wide range of subjects and themes some beyond the scope of the Nairobi Convention thus the RECs are important and key in the discussion. He mentioned that there are frameworks that exist within the AU such as Agenda 2063, which will be the guiding documents in the dialogue. He finalised by mentioning that the meeting will deliberate on the timeframes, the coordination mechanism, and the champions for the ocean governance discussion. He welcomed Dr Jared Bosire to facilitate the presentations of the meeting.

Dr Bosire appreciated the opening remarks and recognised the progress made on ocean governance with the RECs and Commissions since 2019. He highlighted the next ten years are being termed as the *super decade* due to several multilateral environment agreements which will converge addressing key issues such as biodiversity restoration and improved livelihoods and economies, among others. He mentioned that the discussion on Ocean Governance fits well within the super decade. He invited Dr Tim Andrew to make opening remarks.

Dr Andrew thanked the participants for attending the meeting and invited Mr Robin Farrington to make remarks on behalf of WIOGI.

Mr Farrington began by thanking the Nairobi Convention Secretariat for including them in the discussions. He highlighted that WIOGI was commissioned by the German Government in 2020 and will focus on improving collaboration between actors at local and regional levels. He mentioned that the project will support i) development of regional ocean governance, and information management strategies, ii) development of a regional multi-stakeholder initiative including the private sector, and iii) a multi-stakeholder initiative in Mozambique as a pilot country.

Dr Bosire welcomed Ms Olushola Olayide to deliver opening remarks on behalf of the African Union Commission.

In her [opening remarks](#), Ms Olushola Olayide highlighted that Africa is endowed with massive aquatic and marine resources including oceans, seas, rivers, and lakes with potential for blue economy growth. She mentioned that there are huge opportunities around Africa's Blue Economy that can change the narrative for the continent and provide an engine for socio-economic development and industrialization.

She highlighted that Africa's Blue Economy potential is however under threats largely due to governance, capacity issues, pollution through dumping of toxic waste, indiscriminate discarding of single-use plastics, oil spills, environmental degradation, pollution of oceans, and loss of biodiversity as well as effects of climate change.

She mentioned that the African Union recognizes the challenges and thus established a clear vision for the continent as encapsulated in the various pan African instruments and declarations which culminated in the African Union Agenda 2063: 'The Africa we want', a blueprint/master plan for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse for the future.

Ms Olayide highlighted that the 17th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) adopted a decision that welcomed the formulation of the African Union blueprint for Africa's blue economy and to contribute towards its implementation in line with its mandate.

She acknowledged the development of the Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO region which will contribute towards the implementation of these key decisions and therefore urged the meeting to come up with an effective process for the Ocean Governance framework and action plan that would enhance environmental sustainability in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 14 in the realization of Agenda 2063: 'The Africa we want'.

She concluded by reiterating the unwavering commitment of the AU Commission (AUC) to support its Member states, RECs and Commissions on the implementation of the African Strategy on Blue Economy, and in particular Ocean Governance.

Brief Summary of the Concept Paper on Regional Ocean Governance (ROG) Strategy

Dr Andrew mentioned that there have been several initiatives on Ocean Governance in the WIO region resulting in directives/recommendations, some of which have been distilled into the Background Document on Ocean Governance in the WIO region.

He indicated that the [presentation](#) on summary of the concept paper on regional Ocean Governance Strategy will highlight the progress to date as well as set the scene for the discussion on concrete actions and the way forward to achieve the Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO region.

The presentation emphasised that the process of developing an Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO should provide an integrated framework to improve strategic alignment, coordination, and cooperation among actors and stakeholders and to promote integrated and harmonised implementation of sectoral policies to address common environmental, economic, and social challenges.

Rapid updates – contributions, achievements, and requirements for the development of Ocean Governance Strategy

Dr Bosire invited the representatives of the RECs and Commissions to make remarks on contributions, achievements, and requirements for the development of an Ocean Governance Strategy:

1. AUC – Ms Olayide

- ✓ Ms Olayide mentioned that AUC has events/activities that can support the process of the developing an Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO region such as the panel on plastics campaign in Africa for the African First Ladies which was established in 2019, to address ocean plastic pollution which is a key aspect of Ocean Governance.
- ✓ She highlighted that AUC in collaboration with UNEP is developing the African Ocean Governance Strategy as mandated by AMCEN which will be linked with the WIO Ocean Governance Strategy.

2. Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) - Mr Ahmed Hersi

- ✓ Mr Hersi highlighted that IGAD has established a Blue Economy Unit, under the Agriculture and Environment Division, which spearheaded the development of a Blue Economy Strategy. He mentioned that the strategy is dynamic and built around Sustainable Development Goal 17. He highlighted that IGAD is developing a Blue Economy Strategic Manual to assess the contribution of Blue Economy to its region.
- ✓ Mr Hersi mentioned that IGAD will establish a sub-regional coordination platform for fisheries and Blue Economy through the Ecosystems Improved for Sustainable Fisheries (ECOFISH) Project. He highlighted that the Blue Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan intends to promote cooperation and regional integration and strengthening support to the member states to effectively translate policies into concrete actions.
- ✓ He proposed the undertaking of stocktaking of activities being implemented by the RECs on Ocean Governance to inform the development of the WIO Ocean Governance Strategy. He mentioned that RECs are better placed to coordinate the Ocean Governance development process since they are the implementing arms of the AU and can bring together the national governments.
- ✓ Mr Hersi highlighted that there is a need to strengthen collaboration between the high-level leadership, member states and the private sector to share experiences and knowledge among all players through available technology. He mentioned that the WIO ocean governance should raise awareness on issues in the Maritime domain including maritime security and protection of the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).
- ✓ He mentioned that the capacity of the RECs should be enhanced to reinforce technical information and skills in collaboration with UNEP – Nairobi Convention. He finalised by mentioning that the RECs and AU should establish a funding mechanism to support the ocean governance process.

3. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) – Dr Mclay Kanyangarara

- ✓ Dr Mclay highlighted that the issue of ocean governance is new to COMESA, but they are keen to support member states to achieve potential in management and governance of marine resources.
- ✓ He highlighted that Blue Economy is a major pillar in COMESA's Medium Term Strategic Plan which has been technically validated and awaits approval by the Council of Ministers to be effective.
- ✓ He mentioned that COMESA is developing a comprehensive environmental programme under the industry and agriculture division which will include matters of the marine environment, pollution, and oil spills. He highlighted that they have ongoing maritime security programmes under the Governance, Peace and Security initiative.
- ✓ He highlighted that COMESA requires technical capacity development to be able to articulate its initiatives including Climate Change, Blue Economy (fisheries, tourism, energy, mining), marine environment and pollution and waste management, governance, peace and security, MASE, transport, trade, gender and youth, which have a bearing on ocean governance into one programme aligned to the AU strategy on ocean governance.
- ✓ He finalised by mentioning that COMESA will need financial support to develop and implement an Ocean Governance programme.

4. Southern African Development Community (SADC) – Mr Domingos Gove

- ✓ Mr Gove highlighted that seven SADC member states including Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania are part of the Nairobi Convention and four including Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, and South Africa are part of the Abidjan Convention.
- ✓ He highlighted that Ocean Governance in the SADC region is addressed as part of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 which was approved by the Council of Ministers in August 2020. He mentioned that RISDP has five Pillars, namely the Foundation Pillar (Politics, Security), Pillar One (Industrialization and Regional Trade), Pillar Two (Infrastructure Development for Regional Integration), Pillar Three (Social and Human Development) and Cross-Cutting Pillar (Climate Change, Natural Resources Management, Environment, Gender, Youth, Disaster Risk Management)
- ✓ He highlighted that under Pillar One, Strategic objective three strives for interconnected, integrated, competitive blue, green and circular economies that are sustainably developed for the benefit of all SADC citizens. He mentioned that key performance indicators include the development of the SADC Regional Blue Economy Strategy and its operationalization in at least five member states by 2026; and the Waste Management Programme operationalized by at least 10 SADC member states by 2030.
- ✓ He mentioned that a feasibility study was produced in 2020 to support the process of developing the SADC Blue Economy Strategy which includes topics such as shipping/port facilities, fisheries/aquaculture, tourism, energy, biotechnology and mining.

- ✓ He mentioned that the SADC Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with UNEP to support the development and implementation of SADC Blue Economy and a proposal has been developed to secure technical assistance from the European Union, under Technical Cooperation Facility 3.
- ✓ He highlighted that Ocean Governance is being addressed through the SADC statutory structures including AMCEN, Committee of Ministers responsible for Environment, South Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC) where SADC is an observer including its Working Group on Tuna Fisheries, the SADC Business Forum established in 2019 to fully engage the region's Private Sector in all processes for Regional Integration, including Ocean Governance; Trans frontier Conservations Areas (TFCAs), some fully functional (6), others being established (6) and others under conceptual stage (6). He emphasised that the Western Indian Ocean TFCAs, for management and conservation of coastal and marine natural resources, under the conceptual stage includes Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania.

5. The Indian Ocean Commission - Commission de l'Océan Indien (IOC – COI) – Ms Gina Bonne

- ✓ Ms Bonne highlighted that IOC has a framework for the management of coastal and marine resources 2017 -2030 focusing on the environmental aspect of coastal and marine area.
- ✓ She mentioned that IOC has developed a Blue Economy Action Plan that will be validated by the Council of Ministers. She highlighted that the Action Plan considers all marine aspects including environment, shipping, circular economy and pollution among others.
- ✓ She highlighted that IOC is working with other RECs under the Maritime Security Programme to develop a maritime architecture that will include maritime security, safety to navigation, ports, marine pollution from oil spills among others.
- ✓ Ms Bonne mentioned that IOC has fisheries programmes going on in partnership with several institutions in the region such as Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), SWIOFC and SADC – ECOFISH project.
- ✓ She highlighted that IOC is working on large scale programmes that look into management and conservation of marine ecosystems as well as the global aspects of the marine environment including security at sea and safety to navigation. She mentioned that they are discussing with institutions to develop a regional training programme to drive Blue Economy and Ocean Governance.
- ✓ Ms Bonne mentioned that IOC will be initiating a programme focusing on reducing plastic waste in the ocean with a component on an expedition on Ocean Plastic Observation within the four Island States. She highlighted that partnerships have been established with research institutions such as the Research Institute for Development (IRD), Mauritius Oceanographic Institute (MOI) and Institute of Marine Science Madagascar among others, to identify the flow of plastics in the ocean and recycling to inform circular economy as well as raise awareness to reduce the use of plastics.
- ✓ She highlighted that they are working with the Chamber of Commerce for the WIO to address the aspect of the Blue Economy and elements of the circular economy.

- ✓ She concluded by mentioning that they are working with the association of ports to ensure security in the ports.

6. Nairobi Convention Secretariat – Dr Tim Andrew

- ✓ Dr Andrew highlighted that the SAPPHIRE Project has a major focus on Ocean Governance especially the aspect of Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reforms. He mentioned that there are several projects executed by the Nairobi Convention which have an aspect of Ocean Governance such as the Multilateral Environment project and the Partnership project with SWIOFC among others hence there are some resources to support the Ocean Governance discussions.

7. GIZ-WIOGI

- ✓ Mr Farrington mentioned that the WIOGI will work with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat to support different actors including international organizations, governments, the private sector, and local organisation to form a multi-stakeholder initiative to support the broad sustainability of the natural resources in the region.
- ✓ Dr Andrew mentioned that the inclusion of the WIOGI in the initial discussions on Ocean Governance will bring in extra resources to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are included in the process.

Presentation on Draft Action Plan for the Development of a WIO Ocean Governance Strategy

The [presentation](#) highlighted that:

- A core group led by the RECs will be established to drive the process of Ocean Governance strategy development. It was mentioned that there are resources within the Nairobi Convention to support an expert to guide in the process.
- An annotated outline of the strategy will be developed and presented to the core group for input and agreement on the way forward.
- A series of engagements on various aspects of ocean governance have been planned and resources are available to bring in experts to provide information such as linking ocean governance to marine spatial planning, ABNJ, Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), fisheries management, oil spill response mechanism among others.
- There are resources for ocean governance training that will take place over a month, tentatively scheduled for August 2021, for key people who are involved in the process. It was mentioned that the training will be an opportunity to align understanding on Ocean Governance and that participation from the RECs and the AU would be highly desirable.
- Plans are underway for the draft ocean governance document to be presented in a physical meeting later in the year in addition to a series of stakeholder engagements.

- The final draft will be validated and endorsed through the Nairobi Convention Mechanism including its presentation at a Conference of Parties.

The meeting participants were requested to send written comments on the draft action plan to the Secretariat within ten days.

Discussion

- ❖ Mr Gove mentioned that the presented timeline was well laid out to ensure the momentum is not lost. He highlighted that the action plan should be a live document that can be updated along the way. He appreciated that there was the involvement of the private sector in the action plan which has been a missing link in regional integration. He mentioned that they would like to see tourism, mining, and energy especially oil and gas, which are important aspects of Blue Economy included in the action plan. He highlighted that the topic on oil spills should be expanded to waste management which encompasses all aspects of pollution including plastic pollution.
- ❖ Ms Bonne mentioned that the action plan should consider aspects of maritime transport and port security which is key in connecting the countries. She highlighted that IOC is coordinating a programme with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Interpol on port security and freedom of navigation which could link to the ocean governance process.
- ❖ She mentioned that the ECOFISH programme is looking into fisheries and the environment and suggested interaction with its managers to ensure synergies.
- ❖ She highlighted that IOC is planning a meeting on oil spill to discuss the way forward on oil spills. She mentioned that the meeting would also discuss ballast water which is a major source of invasive species in the region.
- ❖ Dr Mclay mentioned the ocean governance strategy development should be linked with the Abidjan Convention region to ensure a unitary process that would inform the programmes of the RECs ensuring a harmonised approach to ocean governance issues. He highlighted that the region could come up with a mechanism to levy a fee on ships transiting through the region which would form a fund to support countries to tackle oil spill.
- ❖ Dr Mclay highlighted that there is already a coordination mechanism between the RECs lead by the AU which could be adopted in the ocean governance development process.
- ❖ Mr Gove mentioned that conservation and land-based entities should be involved in the process because the marine environment is influenced by land-based activities.
- ❖ He highlighted that the coordination mechanism should be anchored at the AU and RECs with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat playing a secretariat function. He mentioned that the process could also bring in sectoral bodies such as SWIOFC which would bring in their expertise to the process.

Closing Remarks

- ✓ Dr Andrew appreciated the comments and contributions of all participants and mentioned that an email will be circulated requested for any additional comments on the draft action plan. He highlighted that the Convention would draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for a Core group representing the AU, RECs, and the IOC to drive the process.
- ✓ Mr Farrington thanked the participants and appreciated the importance of the process towards the Ocean Governance Strategy which would inform the ongoing activities in the region. He concluded by reaffirming WIOGI's support for the process.
- ✓ Dr Bosire thanked all the participants for their time and contributions to the meeting. He appreciated the suggestions and recommendations from the participants. He finalised by mentioning that the Secretariat would share the draft ToRs for the Core Group and proposed stakeholders to be included for their inputs.
- ✓ Ms Olayide thanked the Secretariat for organising the meeting and appreciated the contribution of the GIZ. She appreciated the contribution of the RECs and thanked them for sharing the outputs of the work they are undertaking in various aspects such as climate change. She highlighted that all RECs should suggest possible stakeholders be involved in the process to ensure wider engagement. She concluded by appreciating the process being undertaken reassured the support and collaboration of the African Union Commission until the end.
- ✓ Without any other business, the meeting was closed at 1707 hrs.

Annex

i. The meeting Documents can be accessed using the links below:

- a) [Meeting Agenda](#)
- b) [Draft Action Plan for Supporting the Development of an Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO region](#)
- c) [Final Ocean Governance paper](#)
- d) [Presentation on the Regional Ocean Governance: The Road to a Regional Strategy](#)

ii. List of Participants

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