

## **Expert workshop Meeting on Annex to the African Union Lomé Charter**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 20-21 January 2017:** The African Union Commission, Office of the Legal Counsel convened a two (2) day meeting to enable experts to validate annexes to the Lomé Charter. The workshop aimed at gathering a wide range of experts and stakeholders from all sectors and to deliberate on a wide range of maritime economy issues from all regions and sectors including practitioners, academia, private sector and key stakeholders.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, in her opening remarks welcomed and commended the delegates for taking the time to participate in the validation process of the Annexes developed by the experts. She noted that the Workshop is being convened in accordance with the Assembly Decision, Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (VI) taken during the Extraordinary Summit in Lomé, Togo on 15th October 2016, wherein the Commission was requested to drive the process of the development of the Annexes to the Lomé Charter. She also pointed out that the development of the Annexes is integral in harnessing Africa's blue economy and in achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063.

“The development of a flourishing and sustainable blue economy is a key pillar for economic and social transformation. Under the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, which is our framework for Africa's future, we state that the Africa we want is “a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development”, and the maritime space is a huge resource that will ensure inclusivity”.

While on the subject of blue economy, Dr. Zuma highlighted the vast opportunities on our seas and oceans that need to be exploited in a sustainable manner. She further urged the experts to make certain, youth are placed at the fore front of maritime as they are a capable and innovative work force, that should be utilized in the pursuit of the sustainable development goals contained in Agenda 2063.

“We must therefore ensure that these resources are exploited and used in a sustainable manner, and for the benefit of current and future generations. All the initiatives to develop the blue oceans economy, in particular the development of skills and creation of jobs and businesses, must be of interest to African young men and women”.

The Acting Legal Counsel, Gaspar Constancia Adelina, in her remarks also welcomed and expressed her gratitude to all the experts and representatives of the maritime industry for supporting the Commission in its task to adequately address the development, social and economic components lacking the Lomé Charter.

The Validation Workshop is part of the roadmap towards submission of the Annexes for consideration to the July 2017 AU Summit. Therefore, following the Validation Workshop and finalization of the draft annexes by the Experts, the annexes will be distributed to Members States prior to the convening of the Joint Specialized Technical Committee (STC) meetings at experts and Ministerial levels. Finally, the Meeting of the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs will consider and submit to the policy organs of the Union.

