



Concept Note

Women in Blue Economy Workshop Abuja – Nigeria | 16-17 June 2022

OVERVIEW

The attainment of Africa's integration and developmental objectives rests on its two main assets: its natural and human capitals. The women in blue economy flagship event is being organized to unlock the potential of Africa's two most underutilized resources – its women human capital, and its marine and aquatic natural capital. This event aims to highlight the intrinsic link between the development of women's participation in the blue economy, and the integration and sustainable development of the African continent. To implement the different thematic areas of the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, there is need to establish a comprehensive framework and platform for Africa's most underutilized asset – the women.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The main objectives of the Workshop are to:

- **Identify and understand gaps** in women's participation in various sectors of the blue economy,
- **Explore opportunities and partnerships** and identify tangible areas of intervention with concrete outcomes for encouraging women' participation in the blue economy;
- **Provide a platform for African women to set out their priorities** with view to ensure that these are streamlined in international programmes, funding modalities and positions on blue economy.
- **Stocktaking** on data and statistics on women professionals in all sea related activities;
- **Identify ways to enhance access** to resources, market information, professional networks and leverage in Africa and beyond;
- **Promote the participation of women in blue economy** institutions, national, regional and subregional processes and decision making;
- **Promote women in ocean and water science** in celebration of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development;
- **Identify cross-border collaboration** between RECs, and elaborate on synergies that incorporate women in all areas in the Regions, and develop a mechanism with RECs to promote women in the blue economy.

Finally, this meeting could launch a global partnership on women and the blue economy, with particular attention being given to addressing language, geographical, and connectivity barriers which may impede women from accessing professional networks.

CONTEXT

The fulfilment of the vision of the 'Africa We Want' rests on the African continent's two main assets: its human and natural capital.

Protecting, amplifying, managing and developing these two capital assets are crucial to the attainment of Africa's developmental objectives. The African Union boasts significant marine and freshwater resources, which represent the basis for food security, nature-based solutions, income, ecosystem services and job creation.

The Africa Blue Economy Strategy was developed to protect and unlock those resources and women are an integral part of the successful implementation of this strategy. However, women remain poorly represented in various sectors of the blue economy, or their participation remains informal or invisible.

The number of initiatives on blue economy have been on the rise. To achieve its objectives of generating income and sustainable, inclusive outcomes for the African continent, there is an urgent need to ensure gender mainstreaming within the blue economy. The participation of women in economic activities has been consistently seen as contributing to sustained economic growth.

Furthermore, there is an urgent need to:

1. Strengthen women's participation in and contribution to ocean governance;
2. Identify and address bottlenecks in access to financial tools and other economic resources both in small-scale, artisanal projects, as well as capital-intensive/technology-intensive projects;
3. Approach blue economy projects with a holistic lens that takes into consideration the nexus between environment and gender.
4. Integrate gender considerations in the design, consultation, implementation and M&E of blue economy projects;
5. Strengthen women's participation in and contribution to ocean governance and water management at a structural and policy level;
6. Secure our ocean, seas and water ways to encourage women to take up careers in the blue economy;
7. Identify and address gaps in capacity that hinder women, through robust gender analysis and data across the various sectors of the blue economy

Format

The meeting will be in hybrid format and consist of interactive dialogues and brainstorming sessions.

Venue and Duration

The Workshop will be convened in Abuja, Nigeria. The session is scheduled to take place from 16 -17 June 2022.