



Concept Note and Agenda
Validation of the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy
and Implementation Plan
and
Capacity Enhancement on the UNCLOS BBNJ Agreement
Dar es Salam, Tanzania

Holiday Inn Hotel and White Sands Hotel

1-4 April 2025

I. Introduction

The validation meeting on the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan (AOGS) aims to strengthen regional cooperation and governance mechanisms for Africa's marine and freshwater ecosystems. The meeting will also serve as a platform to enhance Africa's capacity on the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, ensuring a unified and coordinated approach to sustainable ocean governance.

By integrating discussions on the AOGS and BBNJ Agreement, this meeting will advance regional cooperation, strengthen ocean governance, and enhance capacity for effective implementation of multilateral environmental agreements while aligning with Africa's priorities and global commitments.

II. Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan

Africa's aquatic and marine resources underpin critical socio-economic activities such as fisheries, shipping, tourism, and energy production. However, governance challenges—such as overlapping mandates, unregulated exploitation, inadequate regional cooperation and implementation—have impeded sustainable development.

The Africa Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan (AOGS) was developed under the mandate of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) to address fragmented governance and enhance coordination across existing ocean-related frameworks. Since its initial endorsement in the 2015 AMCEN Cairo Declaration and reaffirmations in the 2018 Nairobi and 2022 Dakar Declarations, the strategy has undergone extensive consultation and refinement. The strategy





provides a comprehensive framework for coordination, cooperation and implementation of Africa's existing and future governance frameworks.

The AOGS addresses these issues by:

- a) Offering a unified framework for ocean governance,
- b) Promoting regional cooperation to tackle transboundary challenges like illegal fishing, biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change impacts,
- c) Enhancing Africa's voice in global ocean policy and MEAs dialogues,
- d) By aligning with frameworks such as MEAs, AU Agenda 2063, the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), and the AU Blue Economy Strategy.

The AOGS was developed through a consultative process that included:

- a) Three consultative meetings (18 to 21 November 2018, 21 and 22 October 2020, 15 and 16 June 2021): These meetings engaged experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to identify key governance gaps, harmonize perspectives, and propose actionable solutions.
- b) Collaborations with regional and global frameworks: The AOGS builds upon and complements the Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean region, enhancing synergies between regional and continental initiatives.
- c) A write-shop (16–18 September 2024, Mombasa): This session brought together representatives from the African Union Commission (AUC), UNEP, AU member states, and experts to finalize the draft, ensuring its comprehensiveness and alignment with existing frameworks.

Against the above, a draft AOGS and Implementation Plan is now ready for validation by member states and key stakeholders.

III. Africa Regional Consultations ahead of the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference

The 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), themed "Accelerating Action and Mobilizing All Actors to Conserve and Sustainably Use the Ocean," underscores the urgent need for action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14). At its core, the conference focuses on the critical role of marine biodiversity in supporting ecosystem services, enhancing resilience to climate change, and sustaining ocean economies.

This session will take advantage of the presence of Member States and stakeholders to create awareness on UNOC3 and discuss possible common elements for Africa's engagement.

IV. Capacity Enhancement on the BBNJ Agreement



The BBNJ Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is a milestone treaty aimed at conserving and sustainably using marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It establishes mechanisms for marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, and the fair and equitable sharing of marine genetic resources. While the Agreement presents significant opportunities for Africa, many countries face challenges related to technical capacity, policy integration, and ratification. This meeting will provide a platform to enhance understanding of the Agreement, explore its implications for regional governance, and develop strategies to strengthen Africa's role in global ocean governance.

The capacity-building session will equip participants with the knowledge and tools to:

- a) Deepen understanding of the BBNJ Agreement in the context of the Africa's ocean governance.
- b) Discuss the levels of Africa's preparedness to ratify and implement the Agreement.
- c) Strengthen Africa's collective voice in ongoing and future BBNJ-related negotiations and implementation discussions.

V. Objectives of the meetings

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- a) Validate the finalized draft AUOGS, ensuring it reflects member states and stakeholder priorities and align with regional and international commitments.
- b) Promote cross-sectoral collaboration by integrating ocean governance mechanisms.
- c) Enhance understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and its implications for African nations.
- d) Discuss a unified African view for the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference.