



Concept Note

Africa Blue Economy Week/Commemoration of the African Day of Seas and Oceans

Theme: *From Pledges to Stronger Partnerships: Accelerating Empowering Africa's Blue Economy.*

Dates: 23-25 September 2025

Venue: AU HQ, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Background

Africa's ocean and aquatic ecosystems, comprising over 13 million square kilometers of exclusive economic zones (EEZs), 47,000 kilometers of coastline, and vast inland water bodies, offer immense opportunities to advance sustainable development across the continent. These aquatic resources contribute to food security, job creation, renewable energy production, marine transportation, trade, tourism, and climate regulation. However, the full potential of Africa's Blue Economy remains underutilized and vulnerable to growing pressures such as overfishing, marine pollution, climate change, habitat degradation, and unregulated maritime activity.

Recognizing this strategic opportunity and the urgency for coordinated action, the African Union (AU) has made the Blue Economy one of its key development priorities. This is articulated in flagship continental frameworks such as:

- Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want
- 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)
- African Union Blue Economy Strategy (2020–2030)
- Africa's Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy Framework (PFRS)

The AU Assembly, through its Decision 496(XXII), further declared 25 July as the African Day of Seas and Oceans and proclaimed the Decade of African Seas and Oceans (2015–2025). These actions highlight the continent's growing political commitment to promoting sustainable ocean governance, protecting marine ecosystems, and maximizing socioeconomic benefits from aquatic resources.

In line with this vision, and as part of its milestone activities of the Decade, the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and strategic regional and international partners is organizing the

Africa Blue Economy Week 2025 (ABEW-25). The event will be held from 23 to 25 September 2025 in AU HQ Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and will culminate in the official commemoration of the African Day of Seas and Oceans on 25 September.

2. Objectives

The Africa Blue Economy Week 2025 and the Commemoration of the African Day of Seas and Oceans aim to:

1. Promote Awareness and Advocacy on the importance of conserving and sustainably managing Africa's aquatic and marine resources.
2. Foster Dialogue and Cooperation among AU Member States, RECs, development partners, and stakeholders on accelerating implementation of Blue Economy policies.
3. Showcase Innovations and Best Practices from Member States and partners in blue finance, ocean governance, marine ecosystem restoration, and coastal community resilience.
4. Empower Youth and Women as central actors in ocean-based sectors and blue entrepreneurship.
5. Reflect on the Progress and Legacy of the Decade of African Seas and Oceans and articulate a clear roadmap post-2025.

3. Expected Outcomes

- High-level commitments and political declarations to reaffirm Africa's leadership in sustainable ocean governance.
- Knowledge sharing and technical collaboration among Member States, regional bodies, and stakeholders.
- Policy recommendations and technical inputs to inform AU programming, national strategies, and partner interventions.
- Enhanced visibility of the African Day of Seas and Oceans and greater public awareness across the continent.

4. Participants

The event will bring together 40-50 in-person participants, including:

- African Union Member States
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- African Union Organs and Specialized Institutions (AU-IBAR, AUDA NEPAD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Regional seas conventions and international organizations
- Private sector

5. Format and Structure

- High-Level Opening and Closing Ceremonies
- Keynote speakers-ARBE Commissioner, UNDP High Rep,

- Thematic Plenary and Breakout Sessions
- B2B Networking
- Commemoration Ceremony and Cultural Performances

Draft Agenda

DAY 1 - 23 September		
Time	Activity	Moderator
08:50– 09:30	Registration of participants	
09:00 –09:30	Opening Ceremony Welcome and Opening Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP Representative - Representative from the EU Delegation - AUC Commissioner (ARBE) 	AUC
09:30 – 10:00	Session 1: Setting the Scene <i>This session gives an overview of the status of the Blue economy in Africa, challenges and milestones</i>	AUC
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee Break and Group Photo	
10:00 – 11:30	Session 2: BERG and the Role of Coordination Platforms <i>The Session will examine how multi-stakeholder engagement, knowledge sharing, and strategic coordination can accelerate the implementation of national, regional, and continental blue economy agendas.</i>	UNDP
11:30 -13:00	Session 3: The Role of the Private Sector <i>The session aims to highlight the critical role of private sector actors in promoting an inclusive, and resilient blue economy development. It will explore opportunities for investment, innovation, and</i>	Ms Funmi Folorunsho Africa Shippers Council

	<i>partnership, while identifying barriers to private sector engagement</i>	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00-16:00	Session 4: Financing Africa's Blue Economy: Unlocking Investment Opportunities <i>Showcase innovative financing mechanisms, public-private partnerships, and investment frameworks to accelerate sustainable blue economy growth.</i>	AFDB/EIB
16:00 – 16:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up and close of day 	
Day 2 - 24 September		
09:00 – 10:30	Session 5: Overview of the Blue Economy Dashboard <i>This session aims to demonstrate the Dashboard's features, including data visualization, monitoring indicators, and accessibility for policymakers, RECs, private sector, and partners and further call for a validation from Member States and RECs.</i>	Dr Catherine Jadot
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break	
11:00 – 13:00	Session 6: The role of AfCFTA in driving Blue Growth <i>This session aims to enhance intra-African and international trade in ocean-based sectors, ensuring that the growth of Africa's blue economy is sustainable, inclusive, and value-driven</i>	AfCFTA
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break and Networking	
14:00-15:00	Session 7: Partners Intervention <i>This session will showcase ongoing partner contributions and strengthen collaboration among partners</i>	

15:00-16:00	Session 8: Ocean Governance and BBNJ <i>This session will give an overview of the Ocean Governance Strategy and implementation plan and delve into Africa's readiness for the BBNJ</i>	
16:00	End of Day 2	
DAY 3 - 25 September		
10:00 – 13:00	Commemoration of the 2025 edition of the African Day of Seas and Oceans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-2025 African Ocean Decade (2026-2035) • Cultural displays <p>Official Closing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remarks from Norway - Remarks from Seychelles - Representative from UNDP - Official Closing from AUC 	AUC
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	