

MEDIA ADVISORY

COMMEMORATION OF 2021 EDITION OF THE AFRICAN DAY OF SEAS AND OCEANS

INVITATION TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

WHAT: The African Union (AU) in collaboration with the government of the Republic of Seychelles commemorates the 2021 Edition of the African day of Seas and Oceans under the theme “*Transforming the challenges of African Seas and Oceans into opportunities*”.

Media opportunities include:

- Access to a *virtual* official ceremony of the African Day of Seas and Oceans
- Interview with AU officials and Member States

WHEN: Friday, 06 August 2021

TIME: 11:30 - 17:00 EAT (GMT+ 3)

WHERE: Mahé Island, Republic of Seychelles
virtual- via zoom:

Zoom link is below:

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcrcuusqjwpG9DeEP6tC8mfr0oQL1ySVcxm>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Livestream:

<https://livestream.com/accounts/2466140/events/9784269>

WHO: The 2021 Edition of the commemoration of the African Seas and Oceans is organized by the African Union Commission, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE), Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Seychelles.

Objective:

The overall objective of the commemoration is to raise awareness on the critical role played by Africa’s oceans and seas in attaining

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sustainable development within the framework of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The celebration will also highlight the opportunities and challenges facing Africa's resources in its Oceans, Seas, Rivers and Lakes and deliberate on appropriate policy and institutional responses.

Background:

Under the first Aspiration: "*A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development*", Agenda 2063 recognizes the huge potential of the Blue Economy as a catalyst of socio-economic transformation through knowledge of marine and aquatic biotechnology, the growth of an Africa-wide shipping industry, the development of sea, river and lake transport and fishing; and exploitation and benefits from deep sea mineral and other resources. It also takes into account the marine environmental protection that includes the methods and strategies to combat climate change.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) at its 16th Ordinary Session held in Libreville, Gabon in 2017 adopted an omnibus decision that urges African Countries to reduce all forms of pollution including waste and chemicals in line with the Bamako Convention. In the same vein, the Third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) held in December 2017 called for a Pollution-free Planet and adopted a resolution, which invites relevant international and regional organizations and conventions to increase their action to prevent and reduce marine litter, micro plastics and their harmful effects. In addition, the African Union Assembly at its 11th Extraordinary Session held in Addis Ababa in November 2018, approved the inclusion of Blue Economy in the mandate of Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, which became operational in May 2021 with a Directorate on Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy and a Division dedicated to Blue Economy.

The AU Summit Decision **Assembly/AU/Dec. 496(XXII)** retained the 2015-2025 decade as the "Decade of African Seas and Oceans" and the date of 25 July for the commemoration of the African Day of Seas and Oceans. The 2019 and 2020 editions were postponed due to unforeseen circumstance in 2019 and COVID-19 in 2020.

Participants:

Participants during the commemoration event will be drawn from AU Member States (Ministerial departments responsible for Blue Economy and Maritime sectors including fisheries, biodiversity, water and environment, climate change, port authorities); Regional Economic Communities (RECs); Regional and sub-regional institutions and organizations working on maritime issues, rivers and lakes organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector, civil society group including women and youth organizations, academia, media and relevant stakeholders.

Journalists are invited to attend and cover the 2021 edition of the African Day of Seas and Oceans commemoration scheduled on Friday 6th August 2021 at 11:30 -17:00 EAT.

Draft working programme is attached

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