



**MESSAGE OF H. E. Dr. DLAMINI ZUMA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION  
COMMISSION ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF WORLD OCEANS DAY UNDER  
THE THEME: «OCEANS AND PEOPLE» JUNE 8, 2013**

Officially designated by the United Nations General Assembly as World Oceans Day since 2009, June 8<sup>th</sup> remains an important date in human history. The purpose of this date, in fact, is to honor the world's Oceans as a source of life. This date also aims to remind us of our responsibilities towards protecting the Oceans and marine life for future generations.

The celebration of World Oceans Day this year under the theme «Oceans and People» coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OUA/AU celebrated under the following theme: «Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.» This, in fact, constitutes a priceless opportunity to focus our attention on such an immense source of resources that has, unfortunately, for quite some time, been left out, under-developed, but which remains a source of incommensurable wealth and synonym of life.

Aware, therefore, of the importance of African maritime domain with respect to economic development, and determined to making the welfare of its populations a reality, the African Union Commission has developed the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (2050 AIM) Strategy which was adopted on December 6, 2012 by African Ministers in charge of Maritime Affairs.

The goal of such a strategy is to effectively and sustainably take control over the geostrategic and geopolitical challenges faced by the African maritime domain, particularly in terms of safety, security, maritime resources and various other abundant resources provided by Africa's inland waters, Seas and Oceans. It is in this spirit that the establishment of an African Maritime Day and the development of a Blue Economy by the 2050 AIM Strategy can be justified.

Owing to the importance of the Seas and Oceans towards socio-economic development in Africa, it is necessary for the continent to develop its own relevant maritime infrastructures for the sake of better security, safety, efficiency and respect for the environment. Such an enterprise requires taking responsibility, raising awareness, and the determination of African actors to take the lead upon their destiny. For so doing, the African Union has decided, among other key projects initiated by the Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy, on the construction of Giant Aquariums in all member states, including at the Headquarters of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Such a project aims, not only, at wealth creation through employment, but also seeks to raise awareness among African populations on the opportunities provided by the Oceans and Seas, and the necessity to respect marine fauna and flora.

Such a great initiative goes in line with the theme of the World Oceans Day that we are celebrating today. It is, therefore, in such an atmosphere that we call upon each member state of our prestigious institution to incorporate this Strategy and its Plan of Action and translate it into a reality at national, regional and continental levels so to be able to take advantage of its multidimensional benefits.

“Together, let's navigate the future... now! Keep an eye on [www.au.int/maritime](http://www.au.int/maritime), and swim with us on Twitter and Facebook in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and... Kiswahili!”

Fair winds and Happy World Oceans Day to all!