

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



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KEY NOTE ADDRESS

**HER EXCELLENCY DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION,
FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE 2015-2025 DECADE OF AFRICAN
SEAS AND OCEANS AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE
AFRICAN DAY OF THE SEAS AND OCEANS ON 25 JULY 2015**

AU HEADQUARTERS, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA.



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2015-2025: Decade of African Seas and Oceans!

25 July: African Day of Seas and Oceans!

Welcome & Thank

Honorable Ministers and High-level Officials from the capitals, here present,
Your Excellency, Ambassador Albert Chimbidi, Ambassador of the Republic of
Zimbabwe and Chair of the PRC,
Your Excellencies, Members of the PRC,
Dear Colleagues Commissioners,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen ,
Fellow Africans.

I warmly welcome you and wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all those who, in one way or another, have contributed to make the launch of the 2015-2025 Decade of African Seas and Oceans and the celebration of the African day of Seas and Oceans on 24 and 25 July 2015 a reality.

Tribute to others

On this day the 25 July in 1957, the monarchy of Tunisia was abolished and Tunisia proclaimed a Republic. Happy Republic day to Tunisia.

Also happy Revolution Day to Egypt¹ on 23 July and in advance for tomorrow 26 July; happy Independence Day to Liberia.

Why the seas and oceans are important to us

¹Revolution Day refers to the public holiday in Egypt on 23 July, the anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. It is the biggest secular public holiday in Egypt.

An unknown author is quoted as saying “eternity begins and ends with the oceans tides”. Consequently, we, at the African Union, have taken a keen interest in the green and blue economies because if the forests are the lungs of the world then the seas are the veins of the world. We are also quite conscious of the enormous potential for development the blue economy holds for us.

Given the fact that the seas and oceans offer access to and distribution of energy resources and raw materials, Africa can no longer afford to ignore that potential.

Over 80% of today’s international goods are transported in vessels and over 90% of Africa’s imports and exports are conducted by sea. Over the past four decades, the volume of global sea borne trade has more than quadrupled. Ninety percent of world trade and two-thirds of energy supplies are carried by sea. The world’s oceans and seas are interlinked, and action in one sea or one policy area with a direct or indirect impact on the sea may have positive or negative effects on other seas and policy areas. Whilst over 46% of Africans live in absolute poverty—a figure that is still rising—fish makes a vital contribution to the food and nutritional security of over 200 million Africans and provides income for over 10 million.

Framing our challenges in relation to the seas and oceans

Regrettably, Africa’s export of fish and fishery products has not shown significant improvement in the past decade. Likewise, the increasingly intense use of the oceans and seas by various sectors, combined with climate change, has added to the pressure on the marine environment.

We now know that coastal and marine ecosystems also play a significant role in mitigating the impacts of climate change as they could serve as carbon sinks. The

paradox is that the marine and coastal areas in Africa are among the most vulnerable areas to the impacts of climate change in the world, mainly attributed to the low adaptive capacity in the continent. These negative effects have also been compounded human carelessness and pollution as shown by the un-understandable pollution of our waters by human wastefulness as shown by the dumping of plastic in our water ways these have devastating consequences on marine life.

Maritime security is also one of the most significant dimensions of global and human security in general. It poses multidimensional threats to global security, and in turn has major effects on such essential issues as food, energy and economic security. For the last decade, Africa has been the epicenter of international maritime insecurity. Piracy and armed robbery at sea has re-emerged in the modern era off the east and west coasts of Africa alike, this has caused enormous human and financial damage. But we have also seen other breaches of maritime security on the rise in Africa's seas: illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, toxic waste dumping, and human, weapons and narcotics trafficking.

Thus for Africa, the sustainable management of coastal and marine environments and resources is of utmost priority. The promotion of sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in Africa will significantly enhance food security, ensure constant economic growth and improve the quality of lives of the people in the coastal communities.

What is the 2050 AIM-Strategy and its objectives

After years of struggling with these geostrategic challenges and opportunities, in 2012 at ministerial level, the African Union (AU) adopted the 2050 Africa's Integrated

Maritime Strategy which we intentionally call 2050 “**AIM**”-Strategy to highlight the fact that this strategy is Result-oriented. The overarching vision of the 2050 AIM-Strategy is to “foster increased *wealth creation from Africa’s oceans and seas by developing the blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner.* Our plans around the decade are therefore informed by the 2050 AIM-Strategy, which is dedicated to the memory of those Africans who died at sea trying to earn a better quality life. The strategy provides an opportunity for:

- a) A comprehensive understanding of existing and potential challenges, including allocation of resources to identified priorities over a pre-determined time-frame.
- b) A comprehensive, concerted, coherent and coordinated approach that improves maritime conditions with respect to environmental and socio-economic development as well as the capacity to generate wealth from sustainable governance of Africa’s seas and oceans.

The implementation of the strategy will also assist with:

- (1) Establishing a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone for Africa (CEMZA);
- (2) Enhancing wealth creation through building our countries’ maritime-centric capacity and capability;
- (3) Ensuring security and safety in the African Maritime Domain;
- (4) Minimizing environmental damage;
- (5) Preventing hostile and criminal acts at sea, and prosecute offenders if necessary;
- (6) Protecting the populations, Africa’s Maritime Domain (AMD) heritage and infrastructure in the African Maritime Domain;
- (7) Promoting and protecting the interests of African shippers;
- (8) Enhancing Africa’s competitiveness in international trade;

(9) Improving and facilitating intra-African trade as well as transit transport in landly connected countries; you would recall that as affirmed in the 2050 AIM-Strategy, there is no more “landlocked county” in Africa, but all AU Member States are “landly connected” to the seas and oceans.

The strategy also takes into cognizance that the African continent covers over 43million kilometers in land mass area, with over 35 thousand kilometers of coastline and that 38 African countries are either coastal or island states. The strategy seeks to enhance and further develop (in a sustainable manner) the current 100 port facilities of which 52 of them handle containers and various forms of Cargo.

Linking AIM with Agenda 2063

During the January Summit of the Heads of State and Government the African Union adopted Africa’s Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want – which amongst other objectives it seeks to promote the blue economy and transforming (in a sustainable manner) ownership patterns of key productive assets such as ships, since there are only 1.2% African owned vessels in the world.

In developing this 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy, it is recognized that the Africa Maritime Domain has vast potential for wealth creation. In so doing it also takes into account that AU Member States have common maritime challenges and opportunities, and indeed, significant responsibilities for generating the desirable political will for implementing the strategy. However there has been, up to so far, very limited coordination, across regions. Already ECOWAS and SADC are fairly advanced in developing regional strategies, the challenge is to build on those strategies and scale up to a continental level.

Accordingly, the 2050 AIM Strategy provides a broad framework for the protection and sustainable exploitation of the Africa Maritime Domain for wealth creation. The strategy is the product of cross-cutting inputs from African experts that includes Think Tanks, NGOs and Academia, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs), AU Member States, specialized institutions and other important stakeholders.

The 2050 AIM Strategy is backed by a Plan of Action for Operationalization which constitutes the roadmap for defining the global objectives with a view to enhancing Africa's blue economy and creating employment and wealth.

Further exploring the potential of seas and oceans

It is our view that Africa has several opportunities to effectively utilize and manage its coastal and marine resources. These opportunities include sustainable practices in energy, fishing, maritime transport and tourism, industrialisation amongst others. In incentivizing the utilization of our oceans, seas and waters for industrial development we will pay attention on rewarding good behavior, which develops that sector in an environmentally friendly manner.

In rewarding good behavior and corporate citizenship, we will also seek to reverse the current trend which sees our continent trading in raw and unprocessed energy and mineral resources commodities so that we may protect our economies from overexposure to the international price fluctuations and poor terms of trade related issues. We will therefore pay attention to developing our refinery industries as we add value to extracted oil and gas. We must ensure that these refineries do not further and unnecessary degrade our marine environment. Therefore we will complement our fossil explorations with new and innovative technologies such as

Wave Energy, Tidal Energy, Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion and Off-shore Wind Energy.

In pursuing this objective we will draw lessons from our development partners in Asia, Australia, Europe and in the Americas with a view of strengthening our skills particularly in the aqua culture and geological fields.

We sincerely believe that through the *2050 AIM-Strategy*, we can responsibly exploit our Regional Aqua Value Chains so that we may also ensure jobs creation, food security and enhanced dignity for all our citizens and future generations. We are also very conscious that Developing African sea power presents an unrivalled opportunity for African Ship owners and African women. Not only is the blue economy which is now officially referred to as the new frontier of Africa's Renaissance is an essential part of Africa's 50-year industrialisation plan, Agenda 2063, but it also provides a great chance to achieve the continent's post-2015 development goals on women's involvement in employment and leadership. In the blue (ocean) economy, women are riding the wave of Africa's maritime sector just like Cosmonaut Svetlana on this very same day, 25 July in 1984 became the 1st woman to walk in space. Women have an unrivalled opportunity to drive the industrialization of Africa's oceans.

Conclusion

Excellences,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Until we meet again on Monday 25 July 2016, let me once more sincerely congratulate all the Experts who tirelessly put their shoulders to wheel to initiate and conceive our 2050 AIM-Strategy.

Let me reassure you all, the Commission's priority is to ensure that the Decision adopting the 2050 AIM Strategy is in force. In this regards, within the on-going AUC Restructuring process, the Office of the Legal Counsel in consultation with the Human Resources and other departments will fast-track the set-up of a fully-fledged Department of Maritime Affairs.

As we wind up the Celebration of the 2015 African Day of the Seas and Oceans, I hereby declare the official launch of the 2015-2025 "African Decade of Seas and Oceans".

God bless Africa and God bless you all.

I thank you.

It is now my honor and privilege, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Dlamini Zuma, to officially sign the large print of the four-language 2050 AIM-Strategy, and hold you as distinguished witnesses.