



Reference: **BC/OLC/24.15-L/996.15**

The African Union (AU) Commission presents its compliments to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of all Member States and has the honour to refer the Commission's Note Verbal under reference number BC/OLC/24.15-2/932.15 and dated 26 June 2015 regarding the launch of the Decade of African Seas and Oceans (2015 -2025) and Celebration of the African Day of Seas and Oceans on 25 July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Commission regrets to inform the esteemed Ministries that due to circumstances beyond its control, the AU 2050 AIM Strategy Conference which was scheduled to take place on 21-22 July 2015 has been cancelled.

However, the Commission would like to inform the esteemed Ministries that the program of events for the launch of the Decade of African Seas and Oceans and the celebration of the African day of Seas and Oceans will be as follows:

- |   |              |                 |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| a) Panel Discussion   | 24 July 2015 | 5.00 pm to 7 pm |
| b) Official Dinner  | 24 July 2015 | 7:30 pm         |
| c) Launch of the Decade of Africa<br>Seas and Oceans and Celebration<br>of the African Day of Seas and Oceans | 25 July 2015 | 9.30 am to 1 pm |

In addition, there will also be some side events on 24 July 2015 organized by the Ship Owners Association and Women in Maritime.

The Commission regrets any inconvenience caused by the cancellation of the AU 2050 Aim Strategy Conference and the revision of the program for the events.

The African Union (AU) Commission avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of all Member States the assurances of its highest consideration. *vm*



Addis Ababa, 9 July 2015

To: **Ministries of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of All Member States of the Union**

cc.: **Permanent Missions of All Member States of the Union  
Addis Ababa**



Réf. **BC/OLC/24.15-2/996.15**

La Commission de l'Union africaine (UA) présente ses compliments aux Ministères des Affaires étrangères/Relations extérieures de tous les Etats membres de l'UA et, en référence à la note verbale de la Commission n° BC/OLC/24.15-2/932.15 du 26 juin 2015 relative au lancement de la Décennie (2015 -2025) des Mers et des Océans d'Afrique et à la célébration de la Journée Africaine des Mers et des Océans, le 25 juillet 2015 à Addis-Abeba, Ethiopie, a l'honneur de faire connaître ce qui suit :

La Commission est dans le regret d'informer les Ministères qu'en raison des circonstances indépendantes de sa volonté, la conférence de la Stratégie AIM-2050 préalablement prévue les 21 et 22 juillet 2015 est annulée.

Toutefois, la Commission souhaite informer les Ministères que le programme des activités du lancement de la Décennie (2015 -2025) des Mers et des Océans d'Afrique et de la célébration de la Journée Africaine des Mers et des Océans est le suivant:

a) <b>Table-ronde</b>	<b>24 juillet 2015</b>	<b>17:30 - 19:00</b>
b) <b>Lancement de la Décennie des Mers et des Océans d'Afrique et célébration de la Journée Africaine des mers et des Océans</b>	<b>25 juillet 2015</b>	<b>9 :30 – 13 :00</b>

Par ailleurs, en marge de cet événement, l'Association des Chargeurs et l'Association des Femmes dans le Maritime organiseront des activités dans la journée du 24 juillet 2015.

La Commission de l'UA regrette tous désagréments causés par l'annulation de la conférence de la Stratégie AIM-2050 et le changement du programme de l'événement.

La Commission de l'Union africaine (UA) saisit cette occasion pour renouveler aux Ministères des Affaires étrangères/Relations extérieures de tous les Etats membres de l'UA, les assurances de sa très haute considération.



**Addis-Abeba, 9 juillet 2015**

- **Ministères des Relations extérieures/Affaires étrangères de tous les Etats membres de l'UA**
- **Missions Permanentes de tous les Etats membres de l'UA**  
**Addis-Abeba**



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## CONCEPT NOTE

**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  
24 AND 25 JULY 2015**

**AU HEADQUARTERS, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA.**



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Twitter and Facebook in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and... Kiswahili.

**2015-2025: Decade of African Seas and Oceans!**

**25 July: African Day of Seas and Oceans!**

## Harnessing the Blue economy in Achieving the African Union Agenda 2063

### Context and justification

1. Over the past decade Africa has recorded an average of 4-5% growth rate, despite a recent unfavorable international economic and financial environment. Six of the world's 10 fastest growing economies were in Africa<sup>1</sup>. Growth has mainly been driven by high commodity prices, investment in infrastructure, diversification of trading partners and increasing domestic demand. In addition, improved governance, institutional reforms and sound macro-economic policies have also provided new impetus. It is expected that if this high level growth continues, Africa could significantly reduce widespread poverty in the next decade.
2. Despite this remarkable economic performance, assessment of the quality of Africa's growth shows that it has not been inclusive and broad-based enough to have a significant impact on widespread inequalities, poverty levels and economic structures. In this perspective, one of the daunting challenges facing African policy makers is that of economic and social planning to catalyze inclusiveness and economic transformation.
3. Since the last decade, there is an emerging consensus regarding the critical role that the Blue Economy<sup>2</sup> could play in fostering structural transformation<sup>3</sup> in Africa during the next decade and beyond under the global framework of Agenda 2063<sup>4</sup> and the post-2015 development agenda<sup>5</sup>.
4. Under its 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 on 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 beneficiation of deep sea mineral and other resources.
5. Prior to Agenda 2063, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government adopted the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM-Strategy<sup>®</sup>) and its Plan of Action for implementation (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.496 (XXII)). In addition, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government in Malabo requested the Commission in

<sup>1</sup> AU and ECA, Economic Report on Africa, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The Blue Economy, referred to as "The New Frontier of the African Renaissance" in the Decision of HSG, conceptualizes oceans as "Development Spaces" where spatial planning integrates Coastal Tourism, Marine Biomedicine and cosmetic Industry, Marine Chemical Industry, Marine Communications and Transportation Industry, Marine Electric Power Industry, Marine Fishery and Aquaculture, Marine Salt Industry, Ocean Mining Industry, Offshore Oil and Gas Industry, Seawater Utilization Industry, Marine Engineering, Shipbuilding and Repair Industry.

<sup>3</sup> In this document, the structural transformation is a process by which the reallocation of economic activity sectors with low productivity to those where it is strongest in optics inclusive and sustainable growth conducive to the creation of decent jobs and better paid for youth and women. This process is marked by at least two stylized facts: (i) increasing the share of manufacturing and services with high added value in GDP, coupled with a steady decline in the share of agriculture; and (ii) the decline in the share of agricultural employment and the transfer of workers to more productive sectors of the economy (ADB, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> The African Union Agenda 2063 is a forward-looking framework for Africa to achieve its vision of "an integrated, people-centered and prosperous Africa at peace with itself". The overall objective of the exercise is to develop a plan in the short, medium and long-term which will chart Africa's development trajectory over the next 50 years.

<sup>5</sup> UN on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development," a report which sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world.



consultation with PRC to facilitate the establishment of a Strategic Task Force composed of Representatives of Member States, the Commission and the RECs, with a mandate to consider the technical details of the 2050 AIM-Strategy and propose a road map for the incremental implementation of the strategy in conformity with International Maritime Law; (EX.CL/Dec.822(XXV)).

### Terms of Reference

6. With regard to the paragraph above, the African Union has scheduled an **Inaugural Meeting of the Strategic Task Force on 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2015** at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The purpose is to:
  - (i) consider and adopt the Terms of Reference for the work of the Strategic Task Force to accomplish the mandate given by the Malabo decision mentioned above; and
  - (ii) develop and adopt in consultation with AU policy organs an implementation roadmap for the 2050 AIM-Strategy according to the mandate given by the Malabo decision mentioned above.

### Objectives of the meetings

7. The overall objective of the meetings will be to put the Blue Economy at the center of Africa's economic and social transformation under the global framework of Agenda 2063.
8. The Agenda is as follows:

a) <b>Meeting of the Strategic Task Force</b>	24 July 2015	9.30 to 16.30
b) <b>Panel Discussion &amp; Official Dinner</b> Venue: Multipurpose Hall	24 July 2015	6.00 to 21.00
c) <b>Launch of the Decade of Africa Seas and Oceans and Celebration Of the African Day of Seas and Oceans</b> Venue: Nelson Mandela Hall	25 July 2015	9.30 to 12.00

### Focus areas of the Meetings

9. Given the fact that the 2050 AIM-Strategy is cross-sectoral and affecting many Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Industries, Member States are encouraged to ensure representation to the meetings focus on areas of:
  - a) **Africa's Blue Economy**
10. This focus area will provide a unique opportunity to the AU Commission and various key stakeholders to engage in a constructive policy dialogue on how to better take advantage of the transformative economic potential of the Blue Economy. In that perspective, special attention will be placed on key sectors such as: Coastal Tourism, Marine Biomedicine and cosmetic Industry, Marine Chemical Industry, Marine Communications and Transportation Industry, Marine Electric Power Industry, Marine Fishery and Aquaculture, Marine Salt



Industry, Ocean Mining Industry, Offshore Oil and Gas Industry, Seawater Utilization Industry, Marine Engineering, Shipbuilding and Repair Industry.

**b) Maritime Protection and Governance**

11. Through this focus area, the Commission will engage with its Member States and relevant stakeholders to examine the optimal policy actions for improving the business and investment climate, especially for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises with a view to harness the potential of the Blue Economy. This approach can be made more effective by improving the quality of country and sector diagnostics for prioritization of reforms, and through engagement of the private sector in action-oriented public-private dialogue at the level of policy formulation in the perspective of tracking and curbing illicit maritime exploitation activities, knowledge management and establishment of Maritime think tanks. The Commission also aims at contributing to the improvement of available policymaking tools for measuring and comparing the quality of governance architecture across countries. This will be made possible by the promotion of responsible maritime business practices and the sharing and dissemination of best practices at national, regional and continental levels.

**c) Maritime Capacity Development**

12. Harnessing the potential of the Blue Economy necessitates the development of greater capabilities to sustainably use the seas and maritime resources. This requires better training of government officials, key stakeholders at the various levels of the maritime value chain as well as effective implementation capacity for the AUC, RECs and Member States. In that perspective, to concentrate scarce resources and enhance the effectiveness of the continental policy interventions, targeting and prioritization of the steps to ensure convergence are needed. This capacity development should be coupled with water education, research and innovation activities at national, regional and continental levels.

**Launch of the 2015-2025 Decade of African Seas and Oceans and celebration of the 1<sup>st</sup> African Day of Seas and Oceans on 25 July 2015**

13. Furthermore, the decision adopting the 2050 AIM-Strategy provides for an African Day of Seas and Oceans on 25 July each year and 2015-2025 as the “Decade of African Seas and Oceans”.
14. With regard to the paragraph above, the African Union will **launch the 2015-2025 Decade of African Seas and Oceans and celebrate the African Day of Seas and Oceans on 25 July 2015.**
15. The objective of the launch and the celebration is to:
  - (i) Increase awareness amongst stakeholders of the strategic importance of Africa’s Blue Economy in its Agenda 2063 Vision and to disseminate information regarding the contents of the 2050 AIM-Strategy
  - (ii) Launch the Decade of African Seas and Oceans (Africa’s Decade of the Blue Economy).



16. The AU Commission encourages all AU Member States to organize events that focus on African Oceans, Seas and Lakes and other waterways on this African Day of Seas and Oceans i.e. 25 July 2015 as the Commission launches the Decade of African Seas and Oceans. The AU Commission also encourages all AU Member States to encourage children of all ages to be part of the events, and organize painting and essay writing competitions as well as ocean-related documentaries/movies sessions, some of which are available in many different languages on <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLkI8NR6tcjdJVXvqFctreA>.

### Expected Outcome

17. The expected outcome will be:
- (i) Popularize the 2050 AIM-Strategy and the Africa's Blue Economy.
  - (ii) Develop a road map for consideration by the AU policy organs in view of the extraordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government scheduled to be held in Lomé, Togo in November 2015.

### Participants

18. The participants in the Strategic Task Force event 24 July will be the Member States and RECs/RMs that have already indicated their willingness to participate in accordance with the Malabo decision.
19. In addition, there will also be some side events on 24 July 2015 organized by the Ship Owners Association and Women in Maritime Women from 9.30 to 16.30.
20. The following African stakeholders are invited to take part on the 24 July Panel Discussion and the 25 July ceremony:
- a) Member States (government departments, administrations, agencies and operators in the maritime sector, the port communities);
  - b) Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
  - c) Regional Mechanisms (RMs);
  - d) African Youth;
  - e) Women in Maritime in Africa;
  - f) African institutions and organizations specialized in maritime and maritime-related matters ;
  - g) Financial institutions and insurance companies;
  - h) Students, teachers and researchers;
  - i) The media;
  - j) International organizations dealing with maritime and maritime-related matters;
  - k) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs);
  - l) Development partners;

- m) The African and International private sector;
  - n) Shippers Councils;
  - o) Port Associations;
  - p) Maritime Education and Training Institutions;
  - q) Maritime Desks of REC's;
  - r) African Navies / Coast Guards;
  - s) Ship Owners Associations and
  - t) African Diaspora
  - u) International specialized organizations
  - v) International partners and
  - w) Private sector.
21. **ALL Participants shall be self-sustained (travel-, hotel-, DSA costs etc.) and make their own travel and hotel arrangements.**

#### **Submission of Communications**

22. All correspondence relating to this event should be communicated to the following address:

**Office of the Legal Counsel  
African Union Commission**

**Attention: Samuel KAME-DOMGUIA, Ocist,  
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