

**DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION****Press Release N°189 /2018****AU-ECA High Level Conference on Africa's Blue Economy**

Nairobi, Kenya, 28 November 2018: The African Union in collaboration with United Nations-Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) held a side event during the high level conference on Blue Economy themed “Africa’s Blue Economy: A continental Perspective”. The stakeholders discussed how to exploit the potential of Africa’s blue economy on a sustainable basis while highlighting the challenges and opportunities and how to increase youth and women participation in driving the Blue Economy agenda for Africa’s. The event brought together policy makers, maritime experts, representatives from the private sector, women and youth among others to deliberate on Africa’s Blue Economy.

“The Blue Economy is central to the African Union’s vision owing to the fact that over 90% of Africa’s trade are conducted through the oceans and seas contributing immensely to our socio-economic development” said the African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry, H.E. Amb. Albert M. Muchanga, in his opening remarks.

Blue Economy could become a significant driver for prosperity and job creation in Africa especially to the youth and women whose role in the sector remains constrained. H.E Amb. Albert M. Muchanga pointed out the need to improve trade infrastructure including ports, ships, shipping services and skills which will boost intra Africa trade especially through the Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) - one of the flagships projects of Agenda 2063.

“Blue Economy is a major contributor to the continents transformation and growth aligned to the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the AU-2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)” said the Foreign Affairs Cabinet Administrative Secretary, Hon. Ababu Namwamba, during his opening remarks at the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference.

The Foreign Affairs Cabinet Administrative Secretary, also pointed out the importance of using the oceans sustainably in order to reap the benefits for current and future generations. Hon Ababu Namwamba commended the Chairperson African Union Commission, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, for designating H.E Danny Faure, the president of Seychelles as the Maritime Champion of the African Union.

In his opening address to the delegates, H.E. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard pointed out that the world and the oceans at large face tremendous challenges ranging from the effects of climate change to loss of biodiversity and called upon all stakeholders for global action and implementation of globally effective solutions.

Canada is ready to work and collaborate with countries in ensuring from around the world to make progress in addressing key challenging and to pursuing significant opportunities said H.E. Jonathan Wilkinson in his concluding remarks.

The African Union Legal Counsel and Director for Legal Affairs, Amb. Dr. Namira Negm, recognized the challenges facing Africa's water economies and the African Union's aspiration-through Agenda 2063- to implement the continent's blue economy. The AU has over the years put in place a number of strategic milestones such as the adoption of the African Maritime Transport Charter in 1994 and revised in 2012, the establishment of the AU-2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy) and subsequently the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development, she added.

Amb. Dr. Namira Negm emphasized the importance of a comprehensive coherent and coordinated approach at the national, regional and international levels to improve maritime conditions and urged policy makers, civil society and other stakeholders to honor their commitment to the sustainable blue economy.

During the event, several accolades were given to champions who demonstrated best practices in matters relating to Africa's blue economy.

Note to Editor

Blue economy is a pillar on the Africa Union "Agenda 2063". It is also indicated in the promulgation of various policies such the AU-Agenda 2063 on the Blue Economy; the AU-2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy); the AU-Lomé Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development, and the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter. These policies define "Blue/Ocean Economy" as sustainable economic development of oceans using such techniques as regional development to integrate the use of seas and oceans, coasts, lakes, rivers, and underground water for economic purposes, including, but without being limited to fisheries, mining, energy, aquaculture and maritime transport, while protecting the sea to improve social wellbeing.

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