



**H.E Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson
of the African Union Commission**

Statement to the Executive Council

Of

**The Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of
the African Union on Maritime Security, Safety
and Development**

13 October 2016

Lomé, Togo

Thank you programme director

Your Excellency, Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Togo and our host;

Your Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Chad and Chairperson of the Executive Council; Honourable Ministers Members of the Executive Council, and other Ministers

Heads of Delegations;

Excellencies members of the PRC;

Representatives from International Organisations United Nations and our other partners;

Commissioners here present;

Excellencies Representatives of AU Organs;

Executive Secretaries of the RECs, and Heads of AU Liaison Offices;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Captains of the maritime industry and participants in the broad Blue Economy;

Women in maritime

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me from the onset thank the government and the people of Togo for the warm hospitality and for the excellent facilities they have extended to us, for this meeting .

We could not have found a better destination than Lome to discuss the issues of maritime security, safety and development, which are critical to the Blue Economy.

This subject is a prominent feature in our ongoing discussions to secure a united, prosperous and peaceful Africa. An unknown author is quoted as saying, "*Eternity begins and ends with the oceans tides*".

This is very relevant to this timely extraordinary Summit is far more vital given that Africa's oceanic space is three times larger than its land mass. From a nutritional perspective fish makes a vital contribution to the nutrition and food security of over 200 million Africans and provides income to millions more.

It is also a well-known fact that 38 AU Member States are either coastal countries or island states. The blue economy is very important to all of us, including those that are landlocked, because we all use maritime high ways for imports and exports.

In a nutshell, Africa's development, and dare I say our broad security, largely rely on the oceans and seas, as well as our internal water bodies.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our view that Africa has several opportunities to effectively utilize and manage its marine resources. These opportunities include sustainable practices in energy, fishing, maritime transport and tourism, industrialization, logistics insurance, amongst others.

Therefore, because the maritime space can contribute to our economic and social development we must build on the Aspirations of Agenda 2063. This will ensure that we meet our ultimate goal of eradicating poverty in one generation. It will also contribute to our unity.

The Maritime domain is also home to our mineral resources.

We must 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 unnecessarily degrade our marine environment.

Consequently, we must map out all our marine resources.

Excellencies,

Despite the abundantly obvious potentials, Africa still stands at a crossroads in relation to the accrued benefits presented by the Blue Economy. Not more than 1% of seafarers and just 1.8% of ships globally are African owned, whereas over 90% of Africa's imports and exports are conducted by sea.

The consequence of this is that although exports and imports are processed through our oceans, seas and waterways, we are not receiving the requisite benefits, including the jobs. Even though the economic value of the Blue Economy for Africa is estimated at over one trillion US Dollars, with hundreds of thousands of job opportunities for young African women and men.

At this extraordinary Summit let us request international shipping companies operating in our oceans, seas and inland waters to help create career opportunities in the maritime sector for our young men and women.

As a start we could talk to these companies to train our young women and men, and offer them employment whilst we build our industries. We also extend this invitation to our partners, whom we have begun to engage.

The increasingly intense uses of the oceans, seas and inland waters combined with the effects of climate change and use of toxic substances in the exploitation

of marine resources, have also added to the pressure on the marine environment.

We now know that coastal and marine ecosystems also play a significant role in mitigating the impact on 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 due to the impacts of practices such as dumping and pollution. These negative practices flourish mainly because of our lack of presence in utilisation and protection of our oceans and seas.

It is therefore critical that we pay focussed attention to our oceans, seas and wayerways.

It is important because if you have an asset you must secure and protect that asset.

Challengng our protection endeavours is the rise of maritime insecurity in Africa's seas as a result of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, toxic waste dumping, and human, weapons and narcotics trafficking, amongst others. These pose threats to human and global security, and in turn have major effects on such essentials such as food, energy and sustainable development.

To this end we have developed we have developed 2050 Africa Maritime Strategy:

“to foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing the blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner.”

By linking the right to development with the right to safety and security the Charter also establishes the principle that the latter cannot be possibly secured without the former.

Excellencies

This is entirely in line with our fifty year vision of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which envisages that we reach our full potential, in a lifetime, by (amongst others) establishing flourishing and prosperous societies.

To advance this important cause, we must find a common ground and practical ways to realise our objectives. The required actions and instruments should address the governance of our own oceans, seas and waterways. Practically, I propose that we consider establishing a panel of legal experts who could help clarify our own Maritime Domains, including the continental shelf for each country, in accordance with existing international instruments.

By clarifying these issues, we will have a better understanding of our safety and security areas, whilst also exploring the potential area for our development.

We must also pay attention to the dimensions that can secure:

1. *Our collective nutrition, food security, and development,*
2. *The promotion of inclusive growth* by amongst others securing the inclusion and participation of women not as an after thought, but women must be part of things right from the beginning,
3. *Financing for all our actions,*

4. *Developing African human resources, skills and research in the maritime sector*, by strengthening African countries in the area of education in the blue economy and developing Maritime schools and centres at their Universities. And
5. *Finally* by strengthening our partnerships amongst ourselves and rest of the world which will accrue to us all the necessary outcomes which we desire from the blue economy.

In know the Charter does not go far enough to secure these and development but in your wisdom, excellencies, I know you will find the solution to this dilemma.

I thank you