Draft Statement of the AUC Deputy Chairperson

H.E Ambassador Selma Malika Haddadi

At

The High-Level Side Event on "A Sustainable Ocean Economy for People, Planet, and Prosperity: The Role of Policy and Institutional Coherence".

Co-organised by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD), in partnership with Malta, African and OECD countries

**African Union Permanent Representation to the United Nations in New York
22 July 2025 from 1:00 pm-2:30 (EDT)**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have the honor to deliver the following remarks on behalf of the AUC.

1- Let me start by commending the organizers for convening us today to exchange views on "**Sustainable Ocean Economy for People, Planet, and Prosperity: The Role of Policy and Institutional Coherence".** This is a very important theme. The African Union recognizes oceans as vital global resources, essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063.

2- The oceans are our heritage, and they are an integral part of our culture. They are recognized for their contribution towards food security, livelihoods, trade and general economic development. Apart from offering ecosystem services, oceans play a significant regulatory role for climate. However, these precious ecosystems are under significant pressure from various challenges, including acidification, pollution, illegal exploitation of marine resources, including fisheries, and face other environmental crimes.

3- In response to these pressures and challenges, the AU has called for concerted efforts to develop and implement sustainable policies that prioritize ocean health and resilience. These include investing in research, enhancing regional cooperation, promoting sustainable fishing practices, and addressing pollution through comprehensive strategies. By tackling these challenges, the AU aims to safeguard the oceans for future generations while advancing the goals of the African Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

4- The African Union has called for policy and institutional coherence to achieve a sustainable ocean economy that benefits both people and the planet. This includes aligning national strategies, fostering collaboration, and addressing challenges like climate change, pollution, and overfishing. Furthermore, the African Union has also put in place the Circular Economy Action Plan aimed at promoting resource efficiency and curbing waste including plastics that are chocking our oceans.

The AU has emphasized the need for a coordinated continental effort to implement global and continental frameworks for sustainable ocean management, promote financing for blue economy initiatives, and strengthen marine science capabilities. To this end, the African Union has also recently developed an Ocean Governance Strategy that was approved by the African Ministers responsible for Environment on 17 July 2025.

5- Harnessing the Blue Economy for Africa's Development by utilizing oceans, seas, and inland waters sustainably to drive inclusive growth, job creation, and poverty reduction, is aligned with Agenda 2063's Aspiration 1 (Prosperous Africa) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water).

6- On Policy and Institutional Coherence, the AU has called for strengthening national and regional frameworks for ocean governance, foster collaboration among fisheries, transport, tourism, environment, and trade sectors to avoid fragmented policies and enhance AU Member States' capacity to implement integrated ocean management. In line with this approach, the African Union is encouraging member states to implement marine spatial planning.

7- Furthermore, the AU's roadmap on oceans serves as a comprehensive guide for member states to work towards sustainable ocean management, ensuring that ocean resources contribute to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity in line with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

8- Among other frameworks of paramount importance to Oceans is the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan as well as the Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy. Both the Climate Change and the Blue Economy Strategies addresse the impacts of climate change on oceans by promoting adaptive measures and enhancing the resilience of coastal communities. This includes investing in research and monitoring to understand climate impacts better.

9- The AU is committed to tackling marine pollution by implementing policies that target land-based pollution sources, promote sustainable plastic waste management, and regulate harmful substances.

10-   Key AU frameworks supporting these efforts include the African Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy), the African Blue Economy Strategy, and the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter), all of which provide guidance for member states to safeguard Africa's marine and coastal environments.

11-   These efforts are also complimented by the African Union's recently developed Africa Framework on Chemicals and Waste which was approved by the African Ministers responsible for Environment on 17 July 2025.

12-   The AU encourages the development of a blue economy that leverages ocean resources sustainably. This includes promoting sectors like tourism, aquaculture, and renewable energy while ensuring environmental protection and creating jobs especially for the youth and women.

13-   In fact, this statement serves as a call to action for African member states to recognize the oceans not only as vital resources but also as key components in achieving sustainable development and economic growth in line with regional and global agendas.

14-   Finally, I would like to conclude by reiterating our call to position Africa's oceans and water resources as drivers of sustainable development, environmental protection, and prosperity while ensuring policy coherence across sectors and institutions at national, regional, and continental levels.

I WISH YOU FRUITFUL DELIBERATION AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION