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FOR ANIMAL RESOURCES

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# MECHANISMS FOR ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVE ROLE AND PARTICIPATION OF AFRICAN UNION MEMBER STATES IN REGIONAL, CONTINENTAL, AND GLOBAL AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIROMENT AL MANAGEMENT RELATED FORA OR REGIMES

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ABJN | Areas beyond National Jurisdiction |
| ACE | Action for Climate Empowerment |
| AEWA | The African-Euroasia Migratory Waterbird Agreement |
| AfDB | Africa Development Bank |
| AIMS | Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy |
| AOTTP | Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme |
| ATLAFCO | Ministerial Conference on fisheries cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean |
| AU | African Union |
| AUC | African Union Commission |
| AUDA NEPAD | African Union Development Agency New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| AU-IBAR | African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources |
| AU-MS | African Union Member States |
| BE | Blue Economy |
| BRS | Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm |
| CAMFA | Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture |
| CBD | Convention on Biodiversity |
| CCS | The Convention on the Continental Shelf |
| CFCLR | The Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas |
| CFU | Colony-forming unit |
| CHS | The Convention on the High Seas |
| CIC | Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation |
| CICOS | Commission Internationale du basin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| CLAR | Central Laboratory for Aquaculture Research |
| CLC | Civil Liability Convention |
| CMA | Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement |
| CMP | Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol |
| COFI | The Committee of Fisheries |
| COP | Conference of Parties |
| COMIFAC | Central Africa Forestry Commission |
| CRIC | Committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention |
| CST | Committee on Science and Technology |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| CTCN | Climate Technology Centre and Network |
| CTS | The Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone |
| DDT | Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane |
| DNA | Deoxyribonucleic acid |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| ECCAS | The Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOWAS | The Economic Community of West African States |
| EEAP | Environmental Effects Assessment Panel |
| EEZ | Exclusive economic zone |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations |
| GCF | Green Climate Fund |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GI-WACAF | Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa |
| ICCAT | International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas |
| ICCWC | International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime |
| ICCROM | International Centre for the study of the preservation and restoration of cultural property |
| ICOMOS | International Council for Monuments and Sites |
| IFC | International Finance Corporation |

| | |
|---|---|
| IFS | Introduction from the Sea |
| IP | Intellectual Property |
| IPBES | The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services |
| IPIECA | International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association |
| IMO | International Maritime Organisation |
| IOC | Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission |
| IOPC Fund | International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| IUU | Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing |
| IWMI | International Water Management Institute |
| IWRB | International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau |
| LAF | Legal acquisition finding |
| MAP | Mediterranean Action Plan |
| MARPOL | The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from ships |
| MCA | Minimal Conditions for Access to Marine Resources |
| MCS | Monitoring, Control and Surveillance |
| MCSD | Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development |
| MEP | Multidisciplinary Expert Panel |
| MEPC | Marine Environment Protection Committee |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MOP | Meeting of Parties |
| MRV | Measurement, Reporting and Verification |
| MSE | Management Strategy Evaluation |
| MSSD | Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans |
| NDCs | Nationally determined contributions |
| NDE | National Designated Entities |
| NDF | Non-detriment finding |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NIMASA | Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency |
| NIOMR | Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research |
| OPSD | The Protocol of Signature concerning the Compulsory Settlements of Disputes |
| PFRS | Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa |
| PIC | Prior Informed Consent |
| POP | Persistent Organic Pollutants |
| PSMA | Agreement on Port State Measures |
| QTL | CITES External Trust Fund |
| RAMSAR | The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance |
| REC | Regional Economic Community |
| RFB | Regional Fisheries Bodies |
| SAP | Scientific Assessment Panel |
| SBI | Subsidiary Body for Implementation |
| SBSTA | Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| SPLOS | State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas |
| TEC | Technology Executive Committee |
| TEEP | Technology and Economic Assessment Panel |
| UMA | Arab Magreb Union |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| USA | United States of America |
| WWF | World Wide Fund for Nature |
| WWT | Wildfowl and Wetland Trust |

# Executive Summary

Africa is high in endemic biodiversity that has potential to drive socio-economic development if conserved and utilised in a sustainable manner. Many Countries on the Continent have ratified Conventions and are party to several Regional and International commissions, fora, and regimes. However, despite ratification, most of the African Union Member States (AU-MS) struggle to comply with the requirements of the Fora or Regimes and do not always participate in these Fora effectively. Moreover, implementation, surveillance, monitoring, tracking, and scientific research is limited in some Countries, making it challenging to make evidence-based decisions for negotiations in relevant meetings. Some commissions and AU Agencies have been making strides in supporting Member States agree on common positions before a meeting.

African Union Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) under a project on "Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) commissioned a consultation to develop mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora or regimes in North, West and Central Africa. This report summarizes the key deliverables from the consultancy.

**Regional overview**

North Africa is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea and has an estimated US$5.6 trillion blue economy potential that can benefit Countries in the surrounding Regions. Through the Barcelona Convention, Countries in this Region participate in various research activities and work to reduce pollution from land, ships and other chemical pollutants affecting the Mediterranean Sea. Significant progress is being made to reduce levels of pollution and most AU-MS in the Region like Algeria and Morocco are highly active in relevant Convention meetings.

West Africa has several wetlands, Lakes, areas of high biodiversity, the Atlantic Ocean / Gulf of Guinea with important economic activities such as oil production in Nigeria. Countries in this Region participate in several International meetings including International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) meetings, International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Fund) meetings, etc. In general, there are varying levels of compliance among the Member States in the Region. In addition, together with Central and North Africa Regions, these Countries are Party to the Abidjan Regional Convention that drives several initiatives to reduce pollution in the Gulf of Guinea.

Central Africa is possibly the least studied Region on the Continent and has areas of high endemism with one of the most ecologically significant areas in the world, the

Congo Basin. Some Countries in the Region are active in relevant Conventions Conference of Party (COP) meetings and or regimes while others ratify and struggle to implement legislation or mandatory requirements of the Conventions. Some Countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are not Party to important instruments such as the IOPC Fund.

**Challenges faced when participating in relevant regional and international fora**

From a survey conducted, 49 respondents from 25 of the 31 Countries in the three Regions indicated that the challenges they face when participating in fora meetings include; lack of funding, inadequate resources to implement the Convention at a local level, lack of involvement of experts in key decision making meetings for the Convention at a local level and in International meetings, lack of connectivity to participate in virtual meetings and trainings, high administrative burden, inability to negotiate and language barriers.

On the other hand, engagements with secretariats from relevant fora indicates that AU-MS face some of the following challenges in participating in meetings:

- Connectivity challenges for virtual meetings;
- Funding to travel to meetings;
- Lack of skills for data collection and reporting;
- Limited negotiation skills;
- Language barrier during some technical meetings where English is the only language used;
- Lack of scientific capacity;
- High turnover of staff which lowers continuity;
- Low responsiveness to engagements with relevant secretariats;
- Inability to develop and implement local legislations that comply with relevant Conventions;
- At times challenges to obtain visas to meetings; and,
- Weak support from decision makers for relevant approvals to be made in a timely manner.

In addition, validation visits to Nigeria and Egypt (22-31 January 2023) highlighted the same challenges as listed above, with additional challenges as stated below:

- Challenges in agreeing on some issued between Francophone and Anglophone Countries that leads to a lack of consensus when negotiating on strategic issues.
- Challenges locally to coordinate inputs early enough from all relevant stakeholders before meetings. In some instances, some Departments only receive requests for inputs when there isn't sufficient time left before a meeting.
- Challenges in registering for the meetings or fora which can be cumbersome for new participants.

- Delays in obtaining dates for the meetings/fora/regimes that results in some institutes not budgeting for the meetings. When attendance to meetings is not budgeted for, participants are unable to participate due to lack of funding.
- Challenges on focal points who need to authorize/support all participants attending the meetings including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which at times puts a heavy burden on one individual.
- Conflicting times for meetings, e.g., CITES meetings in 2022 was at nearly the same time as the ICCAT and CBD meetings which affects attendance of meetings.
- Too many Conventions and meetings covering aquatic biodiversity (over 50) which is an administrative burden for many Countries that do not have the relevant infrastructure to support and follow all the necessary requirements for the meetings/fora/regimes.
- Most meetings cover a wide array of issues that cannot be covered by one or two people who are able/ supported to attend the meetings. More resources and people need to be supported to be able to cover all relevant issues discussed as this also affects the ability of Member States to negotiate.
- Significant lobbing is done by some developed countries which affects the way some Countries on the Continent negotiate.
- Some Countries make decisions without following the right scientific protocols or with no sound scientific basis. As an example, for issues regarding quotas, Nigeria works with FAO to conduct the necessary assessments while some Countries make decisions without going through this process.

**Strategies and actions to address the identified challenges**

To drive change and enhance the effective role and participation of AU-MS in relevant regimes and fora, respondents engaged suggested the following strategies/actions:

- A need to supporting National coordination efforts including:
  - Establishing National monitoring units that are adequately resourced like what is done by the Montreal Protocol on Protection of the Ozone Layer.
  - Establishing National consultative groups that include civil society, youth, women, and private sector.
  - Supporting relevant skills and capacity building initiatives at National level.
  - Establishing and or strengthening National coordination platforms.
  - Support the participation of women and youth organisations in some of the International fora and regimes.
- A need to support regional integration efforts through:
  - Regular high-level meetings held at Regional or Continental levels.
  - Coordination of Regional or Continental participants for preparatory meetings for relevant fora.

- ❖ Creation of a network of experts and working groups for decision support when negotiating key issues at fora meetings.
- ❖ Advocacy on the importance and benefits of the Conventions/fora to relevant Policy makers.
- ❖ Regional research initiatives to drive an Africa-wide blue economy and to safeguard the environment.
- ❖ Enhanced adoption of climate change Policies at a Regional level.
- ❖ The development of Regional strategies that are anchored on multi-year, multi-sector projects/programmes.

Other strategies suggested during the validation visits include:

- ❖ Increase the number of participants that attend meetings to ensure that each Country can cover the relevant issues discussed and negotiations during meetings;
- ❖ Support the signing of Regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) for each Region on species management;
- ❖ On pollution, a holistic approach is needed at Regional or Continental level as waste in the marine environment from one country ends up in other Countries;
- ❖ Regional meetings must be held regularly, and preparatory meetings need to be done in advance to give leeway for inputs. Some pre-meetings should be held a year or two before the COP meeting to ensure robust engagements and consensus from all Member States;
- ❖ AU to take strong leadership in coordinating meetings and if possible, appoint a speaker on behalf of the Continent who communicates the decisions reached by Member States. A similar model to what the European Union does can be followed;
- ❖ A regional think tank can be established to be consulted during meetings and who can work with an African group of negotiators. The think tank can be from the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa;
- ❖ Support data collection initiatives to ensure the Continent has its own baseline data that can be monitored and reported on for negotiation purposes;
- ❖ Define technology needs for the Continent and legal requirements for negotiation in different fora and regimes; and,
- ❖ AU should not create new structures but work with other existing structures such as the Africa biodiversity negotiators and the Africa Group of Negotiators on climate change.

Secretariats engaged suggested the following strategies/actions:

1. Enhancing scientific capacity of representatives so they can engage better in technical discussions;

2. Improving coordination at National level so Countries adhere to specific deadlines (especially mandatory ones). This could include supporting them with reminders of when certain deadlines for reporting, submission of applications, etc. are;
3. Developing systems that enable institutional memory, so information is not lost with changes in personnel;
4. Supporting resource mobilization efforts to drive specific capacity building needs, e.g., species identification; and,
5. Engagements with the European Union (EU) on behalf of AU-MS to address and develop systems for speedy visa processing to attend meetings.

**Strategies and mechanisms to enhance effective participation of AU-MS**

Based on the information obtained and analysed on the relevant regimes and fora, four strategic goals and eighteen mechanisms are suggested to enhance the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management. These are:

**Strategic Goal 1:** Increase awareness of relevant fora and regimes on climate change, environment, and aquatic biodiversity in the context of the blue economy. Mechanisms that can be employed include:

1. Creation of a platform for AU-MS to obtain information on relevant fora and their benefits in a summarized manner and in English, French and Arabic. The platform can be linked to relevant fora/regime websites for more details;
2. Conducting regular awareness raising meetings/workshops;
3. Coordinating a network of experts from existing rosters and in line with the coordination structure of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa in each region to provide insights, data, and models on key pertinent issues on aquatic biodiversity, climate change and environment;
4. Creating partnerships with relevant fora secretariats to enhance coordination of AU-MS to participate in different meetings/workshops; and,
5. Conducting high level meetings with relevant decision makers (Ministerial level) to highlight the importance of the fora and their benefits.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Improve capacity and skills of Member States through training, technology, and advanced research. Suggested mechanisms include:

1. Enhancing negotiation skills through training workshops on an annual or bi-annual basis;
2. Improving technical capabilities through short-term or long-term technical training in specific fields;
3. Leveraging technology through technology transfer and technology localisation from developed States;
4. Enhancing research and data collection by acquiring equipment and capabilities to support regional research initiatives; and,

5. Augment existing knowledge repository for information and data sharing to enhance reporting and strengthen institutional memory on relevant fora.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Enhancing coordination of AU-MS to effectively participate in relevant fora. Mechanisms that can be employed include:

1. Strengthening local coordination by supporting relevant national institutions to develop systems and tools for coordination and reporting;
2. Strengthening regional coordination by supporting Regional Economic Communities (RECs), commissions, and authorities to coordinate Regional workshop/meeting relevant to the fora or regimes;
3. Strengthening Continental coordination by conducting preparatory meetings where AU-MS can flesh-out a common position for negotiation on key issues in fora meetings. This may include appointing a speaker on behalf of the Continent. This should be done collaboratively with existing platforms that are coordinating their Member States before meetings; and,
4. Supporting the harmonisation of legislation on biodiversity, climate change and environmental issues across transboundary areas to enable effective implementation of fora and regime requirements, monitoring, and surveillance.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Enhancing implementation of fora or regimes at a local level through strategic programs. Mechanisms include:

1. Establishing partnerships on behalf of AU-MS with International organisations to develop Regional multi-year, multi-disciplinary programs.
2. Establishing a resource mobilization team and conducting proposal writing workshops to support various institutions, Governments, and organisations on the Continent.
3. Support the establishment of an Africa blue economy trust fund with support from funders such as development banks, developed Countries, foundations, UN agencies and other International organisations. Currently, the Intergovernmental Authority (IGAD) for East Africa is coordinating efforts for the establishment of the blue economy trust fund.
4. Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework with indicators, baseline, and targets to monitor implementation progress.

## Report overview

For ease of reference, this report has ten key session, section 1 is the background summarizing relevant Regional, Continental, and Global frameworks from which the rational for this project is anchored. An overview of the three Regions (North, West and Central Africa) is also provided.

Section 2 addresses the premise for an integrated Regional approach while section 3 outlines some efforts already made to enhance participation in relevant fora and regimes. Section 4 lists the relevant fora and regimes under consideration and, the level of awareness of these fora by AU-MS in North, West and Central Africa. A

summary of the objectives, governance, legal issues, and benefits of the relevant fora is also provided.

Section 5 summarises the challenges, strategies and actions suggested by respondents from AU-MS in North, West and Central Africa including inputs from RECs, Commissions, Authorities in the Region. Section 6 gives a summary view of the responses from a sample of Secretariats engaged from IOPC Fund, ICCAT and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Section 7 summarises the outputs from validation visits to Nigeria and Egypt while section 8 covers strategic goals and mechanisms to enhance the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora and regimes and Section 9 is a concluding chapter with recommendations including a draft results framework in Section 10. Annex 1 gives an overview of the questions asked in a survey to the Member States.

To compile this report, the following methods were employed:

1. Desktop study/review
2. Online surveys
3. Online meetings with focal points and relevant Government Department representatives, NGOs, researchers etc.
4. Online meetings with relevant International fora or regime secretariat representatives
5. Validation visits and meetings in Nigeria and Egypt
6. A validation workshop by member states from the three regions

# 1. Background

The Blue Economy (BE) concept is part of several International, Continental, and Regional Strategies. Internationally, the BE forms part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), mainly SDG 14 on life below Water and SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation. Several other SDGs such as SDG 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9 can be addressed when driving sustainable Blue Economy strategies that create jobs and industries while conserving natural resources for use by the current and future generations.

Continental frameworks that call for a Blue Economy include the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS), the 2014 Africa's integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS), the 2016 African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 stipulates one of the priority goals as the development of a Blue Economy to achieve Africa's aspiration on "A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development". To this effect, a Blue Economy Strategy was developed for the Continent in October, 2019 with the overall objective to guide the development of an inclusive and sustainable blue economy that becomes a significant contributor to Continental transformation and growth, through advancing knowledge on marine and aquatic biotechnology, environmental sustainability, the growth of an Africa-wide shipping industry, the development of Sea, River and Lake transport, the management of fishing activities on aquatic spaces and the exploitation and beneficiation of deep Sea mineral and other resources.

The African Blue Economy Strategy is anchored on five themes, namely:

i. Fisheries, aquaculture, conservation, and sustainable aquatic ecosystems.
ii. Shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety, and enforcement.
iii. Coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure.
iv. Sustainable energy and mineral resources and innovative industries.
v. Policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, innovative financing.

Several Regional Policies, legislation and frameworks have been developed to operationalize International and Continental frameworks at Regional level and for some African Union Member States (AU-MS), this has translated to National strategies and implementation plans.

These International, Continental, and Regional frameworks safeguard some of Africa's highly productive marine ecosystems including Large Marine Ecosystems, Rivers, Lakes, Seas, and Oceans.
Africa holds a wealth of biodiversity and ecosystem services that can provide significant development opportunities for the Continent if conserved and utilised sustainably. North Africa has the Mediterranean Sea, shared with other Countries in Europe, and the Middle East. The Mediterranean Sea has an estimated blue economy potential of over US$ 5.6 trillion. It represents just 1% of the total Ocean but comprises 20% of the Global gross marine product, of which 92% is from marine and coastal tourism, 2% from fisheries and aquaculture and 6% from direct services enabled by the Ocean[1].

West Africa which is linked to North and Central Africa by the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Guinea and Canary Large Marine Ecosystem and several inland water bodies, has five areas that were identified as key centres of freshwater species diversity. These are: i) the southern coastal area of Guinea; ii) the lower river Jong in Sierra Leone; iii) Ebri Lagoon in Cote d'Ivoire; iv) lower Ogun and Ouene rivers and their coastal lagoons in Benin, and v) western Nigeria and the Niger Delta to the lower Cross river in southern Nigeria (IUCN, 2009)[2]. The coasts of West Africa offer many stop-over sites for members of the Palearctic population of greater flamingos, making these site highly relevant to the Bonn Convention (the Convention on Migratory Species).

Central Africa has high biodiversity endemism and is one of the least studied Regions on the Continent. The richest aquatic ecosystem in Africa is the Congo Basin and comes second Globally after the Amazon Basin (Teugels and Thieme, 2005)[3]. Some of the richest eco-Regions in Central Africa include the Lower Guinea, the Malebo Pool, the central Congo Basin, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Edward, etc. which forms part of the eco-Region of Lake Victoria and Lake Albert which is part of the eco-region of the Upper Nile.

Central Africa is made up of four ichthyological provinces, subdivided into aquatic eco-Regions ((Teugels and Thieme, 2005; Stiassny et al., 2007[4]):

i. The Nilo-Sudan province represented by the Albert aquatic eco-Regions.
ii. The East Coast province comprising Lake Victoria and Lake Edward eco-Regions.
iii. The hydrological basin of the Congo, and
iv. The Oceanic Islands in the Guld of Guinea.

[1] Randone. Et al. 2017. Reviving the Economy of the Mediterranean Sea: Actions for a Sustainable Future. WWF Mediterranean Marine Initiative, Rome, Italy.
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[4] Stiassny MLJ, Hopkins CD. (2007) Introduction. In: Stiassny MLJ, Teugels GG, Hopkins CD. (Eds) The Fresh and Brackish Water Fishes of Lower Guinea, West-Central Africa, Vol. 1, Collection Faune et Flore Tropicales 42, IRD-MNHN-MRAC, Paris and Tervuren.

Most of these eco-Regions have high species endemism including plants, birds, mammals, fish etc. some of which are critically endangered due to various external factors including human settlement and over exploitation, trade, among other issues.

As part of a Continental strategy on livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and wildlife resources, the African Union Commission (AUC) designated the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) to coordinate efforts on utilizing these resources in a sustainable manner for human wellbeing and economic development.

AU-IBAR is currently being supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to implement a project on "Conserving Aquatic Biodiversity in African Blue Economy". The overall objective of the project is to enhance the Policy environment, Regulatory framework and institutional capacity of AU-MS and Regional Economic Communities to sustainably utilize and conserve aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems. As part of this project, a consultant was hired to develop mechanisms for enhancing the effective role and participation of African Union Member States in Regional, (North, Central, West Africa) Continental, and Global aquatic biodiversity conservation and environmental management related fora or regimes. This report summarises the outputs from the consultancy with a focus on International fora and regimes.

## 2. The need for Regional and Global collaborations

International, Continental, and Regional Fora and Regimes present an opportunity for collaboration and sharing of resources (technology, financial, human, etc.) in addressing some of the pertinent challenges faced in natural resources management, globally. For Africa, this is crucial as most of the people on the Continent depend on natural resources for their livelihoods and sustenance.

Key challenges currently faced by AU-MS in conservation include overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, introduction of invasive species, unplanned or poorly planned developed, natural disasters, climate change and other natural or man-induced environmental catastrophes. In addition, some AU-MS, particularly in North, West and Central Africa face peace and security challenges which hampers on their ability to manage exclusive economic zones (EEZs). These challenges require an integrated approach in developing and implementing solutions as most systems are interconnected. Moreover, collaboration through coordinated Monitoring, Control and Surveillance operations and sharing of information in a timely manner is of paramount importance to ensure sustainability of natural resources in the three Regions.

Climate change and variability has shown the need for International collaborations as its impact will be severe in least developed Countries who are the least emitters of

greenhouse gases. International frameworks therefore allow for a comprehensive approach in addressing such issues and create a polluter pays principle that benefits Countries that suffer the consequences of the actions of other Countries. By participating in Conventions Conference of Party (COP) Meetings and other fora and regimes on biodiversity, climate change and environmental management, Africa stands to benefit and support its development.

This can be achieved by actively participating in decision making, localizing relevant guiding principles in National legislation, and ensuring harmonization of legislation across Regions with shared systems. Evidently, local implementation of different International Instruments has supported the conservation of some species that were nearly extinct.

Furthermore, the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources at the time of its adoption in 1968 paved a way for framing a Continental approach in natural resources management that enabled the development of environmental Policies for AU-MS. At a Global level, the adoption and ratification of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) supported several initiatives to conserve biodiversity across the world for the benefits of current and future generations.

Through International collaborations, Africa can obtain new technologies that could assist the Continent to leapfrog in its biodiversity conservation efforts while driving economic development through green/blue industry development. Opportunities to enhance research capabilities and develop relevant skills can be harnessed through partnerships with developing Countries under the frameworks and protocols of the relevant Conventions. This in turn creates an enabling environment for investment, development of new value chains and industries and enhancing food security, eradicate poverty while supporting the wellbeing of Africa's population.

International, Continental, and Regional fora and regimes provide a much-needed platform for integrating approaches in natural resources management and blue economy advancement. Access to various benefits stated in different Conventions or Agreements can be obtained through participation in relevant strategic meetings for decision making. However, the lack of or weak participation of AU-MS, and the lack of a common African voice in such fora or regimes hinders progress and is a cause for concern that needs urgent attention.

## 3. Existing Interventions for a common African position

In 2009, African Countries began dialogue to strengthen the African Voice in international policy and negotiation platforms. This was enhanced by the development of the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa with several objectives outlined to improve coordination within the fisheries and aquaculture sector. These objectives include:

- Enhancing conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources through the establishment of national, and sub-national governance and institutional arrangements that ensure the societal contribution generated by Africa's sectors have the greatest impacts at the most appropriate levels;
- Strengthening South-South (bilateral and regional) cooperation, and developing coordinated mechanisms among RECs, RFBs, LME-based commissions to ensure coherence of fisheries policies and aquaculture development and their adoption and adaptation;
- Creating awareness on the potential and importance of the sector, based on current and emerging trends, challenges, and needs as well as enhancing the capacity of governments and institutions to ensure sustainable development of the sector; and
- Increasing and consolidating the "African Voice" in the governance and management of high seas fisheries to substantially enhance the benefits accruing to the Member States associated with exploitation of high seas resources.

Following the endorsement of the Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) recommendations by African Heads of States and Governments, Think Tank Meetings were organized including AU-MS, RECs, Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders to exchange views and experiences in an inclusive, participatory, and transparent manner.

The resultant Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa makes provision for the inclusion of various stakeholders in the decision-making process, improves governance of the fisheries sector and allows for better coordination of the sector across the continent. To this effect, the coordination structure makes provision for working groups that give inputs to a think tank comprising of regional stakeholders who provide inputs to an Advisory Council that uses this input to develop policy frameworks. The policy frameworks are reviewed by the Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) who report to the heads of states during the AU Summit.

In addition to the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, several efforts have been made by RECs, RFBs and CSO to support AU-MS before meetings to define a common voice before negotiations. As an example, AUDA NEPAD has supported AU-MS to participate in CBD meetings. AUC supports AU-MS to engage on CITIES before relevant party meetings.

At regional level, ATLAFCO/COMHAFAT (the Ministerial Conference on fisheries cooperation among African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean) supports its MS to meet and agree on common positions before an international meeting/fora. COMHAFAT at times supports member states to attend meetings, thereby increasing delegations from countries within their region. The Sub regional Fisheries Commission works to harmonise and ensure consistency of national fisheries policies, improve monitoring, surveillance of fisheries, strengthen human capacities and reinforcing the scientific and technical information system. ECOWAS has also been working to support its Member States in relevant meetings.

**Featured Case: Agreement on the Post State Measures (PSMA)**

AUDA NEPAD and AU-IBAR collaborated to support African Union Member States in providing inputs into the drafting of the PSMA to ensure the agreement was suitable for African. The head of fisheries at AUDA NEPAD (Dr Sloans Chimatiro) at the time convened a meeting with African Member States in Rome. During the initial discussion, AU MS were discontented with the PSMA as the agreement did not cater for some their needs. However, following several meetings, AU MS agreed on some common positions in the PSMA, resulted in two clauses being added to the Agreement.

Currently the PSMA is well understood by AU MS who have or are signing the Agreement because they have contributed to it. Similarly, African Union can support MS to provide contributions to agreements before they are finalized in order to ensure that such agreements are well understood by AU-MS and they take ownership of the Agreements.

# 4. International, fora relevant to North, Central and West Africa

Several International fora support efforts to conserve aquatic biodiversity, manage the environment and address the impacts of climate change. These are listed and analysed in the sessions below.

## 4.1 International fora on aquatic biodiversity, climate change and environment

Over thirty International Conventions and Agreements are in place to support climate change, environment, and biodiversity related issues. Each Convention has a governance structure including a decision-making body (usually Parties from each Country that are members to the Convention), a secretariat that coordinates activities on behalf of the Parties and committees that engage on specific issues relating the Convention. These Conventions allow for relevant fora in the form of Conference of Party meetings to be established to discuss and address key issues in line with the Convention. Some of the International fora and regimes relevant to North, West and Central Africa analysed include:

<u>Fora and regime on aquatic biodiversity</u>

1. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Party (COP) meetings;
2. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) COP meetings;
3. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals COP meetings;
4. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands COP meetings;
5. The World Heritage Committee meetings;
6. Meeting of the Parties (MOP) of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing;
7. ICCAT - International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, regular meeting of the Commission;

8. Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABJN);)
9. International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling Commission Meetings;
10. Committee on Fisheries (COFI), a subsidiary body of the FAO Council; and,
11. Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) meetings.

Fora and regime on aquatic environment including pollution issues

1. Meeting of State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (SPLOS) covering four conventions and an optional protocol: The convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone (CTS); the Convention on the High Seas (CHS); the Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas (CFCLR); the Convention on the Continental Shelf (CCS) and the Protocol of Signature concerning the Compulsory Settlements of Disputes (OPSD);
2. IMO Council, Assembly and Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) meetings on various Conventions e.g., International Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties; Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter; International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships; International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 1973) as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78); International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, etc;
3. Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Triple COP for the Rotterdam Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade such as DDT and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal;
4. Minamata Convention on Mercury COP meetings;
5. IOPC Fund - the 1969 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (1969 Civil Liability Convention) and the 1971 International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution (1971 Fund Convention), regular meeting of governing bodies;
6. Sessions of the International Sea Bed Authority; and,
7. Barcelona Convention COP meetings.

Fora and regime on climate change

1. Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Vienna Convention and the Meeting of Parties (MOP) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) including Paris Agreement COP meetings; and,
3. UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP meetings.

These Conventions COP meetings and fora cover issues of the marine environment, biodiversity conservation and climate change, among other issues. The United Nations (UN) provides Secretariat support for most of the meetings through its agencies such as Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environmental Management Programme, etc. while some independent organisations have also been established to administer and coordinate activities such as the International Marine Organisation (IMO). In the case where an organisation is established, the entity provides a framework for a secretariat to operate.

The marine environment is largely governed by the United Nations Law of the Seas from which other Conventions, Protocols and Agreements were established. IMO as an example has three key Conventions that it oversees:

- International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea,1974, as amended;
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto and by the Protocol of 1997; and,
- International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers as amended, including the 1995 and 2010 Manila Amendments.

IMO works with other entities on other Conventions relating to maritime safety and security and ship/port interface; Conventions relating to the prevention of marine pollution; and Conventions covering liability and compensation in case of a disaster on oil pollution or other substances. The organisation supports and coordinates Conference of Party meetings, workshops, capacity building and awareness raising initiatives.

On the other hand, FAO Council has several committee meetings dealing with food security issues, agriculture, commodities, fisheries, forestry etc. The Committee of Fisheries (COFI) was established in 1965 to review and consider fisheries and aquaculture related issues and challenges. It is an inter-governmental forum that provides periodic recommendations and policy advice to Governments, Regional Fisheries Bodies, civil society, private sector, and the Global community.

To harness synergies among three Conventions with a common objective, the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Secretariats work to coordinate efforts to protect human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes. These Secretariats also engage with members to coordinate meetings in line with the three Conventions in triple COP meetings and support them with compliance and legal issues as needed.

Similarly, on the Conventions related to biodiversity conservation such as CBD, CITES, Ramsar, among others, some effort is being made during Conference of Party meetings to draw out the synergies between the Conventions. As an example, the CITES Strategic Vision was updated in 2016 to refer to SDGs and its objectives mapped against the Aichi Targets from the CBD. CITES Secretariat is also involved in CBD meetings as appropriate. Such efforts to harmonise and draw synergies among the different Convention meetings and other fora are needed for a more structured approach in engagements and implementation of the relevant provisions in the Convention text.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has binding Agreements such as the Paris Agreement and other non-binding Agreements to

combat dangerous human interference with the climate system in part by stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. To date, 27 conference of party meetings have been held, the last (2022) of which was in Egypt (COP 27 – Sharm el-Sheikh). These COP meetings are held on an annual basis and all States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP where they review the implementation of the Convention and any other legal Instruments that COP adopts.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 lists some key International fora and regimes including the objectives, purpose, salient provisions in the governing or Statutory Instruments (e.g., Rules of Procedures), opportunities and incentives and Policy and Legal issues of provisions in the relevant governance or Statutory Instruments.

*Table 1: International fora or regime on aquatic biodiversity*

**The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Nagoya Protocol; Cartagena Protocol COP Meetings**

**Purpose:** To advance implementation of the CBD through the decisions it takes at its periodic meetings. The Vision is by 2050, we will be living in harmony with nature.

**Objectives:**

1. The conservation of biological diversity;
2. The sustainable use of the components of biodiversity; and,
3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**

1. Meetings are held every two years (COP 15 was December 2022);
2. COP meetings take place at the seat of the Secretariat unless otherwise agreed;
3. Extraordinary meetings can be convened at the written request of a Party and with support from at least one third of the Parties;
4. Observers may participate without the right to vote, unless one third of the Parties object;
5. The agenda shall be distributed by the Secretariat at least 6 weeks before the meeting;
6. Each Party shall be represented by a head of delegation, accredited/alternative representatives and advisers as it requires;
7. Credentials of representatives/alternative representatives and advisers shall be submitted within 24 hours after the opening of the meeting;
8. The President and ten Vice Presidents are elected at the commencement of the meeting and the President shall remain in office until the election of a new President in the next meeting while the vice President remains in office until the end of the next meeting;
9. Additional subsidiary bodies may be established in addition to the scientific, technical and technological advice and the COP selects the chair of each body;
10. Meetings of the subsidiary bodies shall be at the same time as the COP unless otherwise agreed.
11. COP and subsidiary body meetings shall be held in public;
12. Proposals for discussion can only be considered if translated and circulated a day before the session.
13. Each Party has one vote;
14. Regional economic integration organisations can vote representing their all their members if their members do not exercise their vote; and,
15. Subsidiary bodies include some on scientific, technical and technological advice; subsidiary body on implementation, working group on protected areas and working group on Article 8(j).

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **Access to and Transfer of technology:** Access to and transfer of technology referred to developing Countries shall be provided and/or facilitated under *fair and most favourable terms,* including on concessional and preferential terms where mutually agreed, and, where necessary, in accordance with the financial mechanism established. In the case of technology subject to patents and other intellectual property rights, such access and transfer shall be provided on terms which recognize and are consistent with the adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights.
2. **Funding:** Access to GEF funding by developing Countries can be done by showing clear commitment by Government to be part of the relevant protocols (e.g. Nagoya Protocol) or CBD provisions as committed by the relevant Minister within Country.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Research:** Technical and Scientific Cooperation.
2. **Funding:** funding from Secretariat to support the participation of least developed Countries; GEF funding to implement programme of action; Other discretionary funding from developed Countries in support of developing Countries.
3. **Reporting:** The Convention Secretariat supports governments to strengthen their reporting, e.g., developing indicators to measure trends in biodiversity.
4. **Sharing of best practices** among Member Countries including, how to deal with biodiversity concerns during development planning, how to promote transboundary cooperation, and how to involve indigenous peoples and local communities in ecosystem management.
5. **Resources for negotiators:** https://www.cbd.int/doc/negotiation/

**The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) COP Meetings**

**Purpose:** To review and make decisions on the regulation of trade in endangered species.

**Objectives:**

1. **Goal 1**: Ensure compliance with and implementation and enforcement of the Convention.
2. **Goal 2**: Secure the necessary financial resources and means for the operation and implementation of the Convention.
3. **Goal 3:** Contribute to significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss and to achieving relevant Globally-Agreed goals and targets by ensuring that CITES and other Multilateral Instruments and processes are coherent and mutually supportive.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**

1. Meetings are held every two or three years (the last being in 2022);
2. Provisions to vote, observe and represent a Party are similar to CBD provisions;
3. Authorisation to represent a Party shall be from the Head of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Head of Government;
4. Advisers submit credentials authorising them as an adviser from the same authorities or an authorised representative;
5. Observers shall present evidence of approval from the State they are located 6 weeks before the opening of the meeting;
6. Working languages are English, French and Spanish though a participant can speak in their own language provided they provide the necessary translation;
7. The Chairman, alternative chairman and two vice chairman shall be selected by the Standing Committee. These together with the Chairmen of the Committee I and II and the Secretariat constitute the bureau.
8. Proposals to amend Appendices I and II should be submitted 150 days before the meeting. Such proposals can be agreed upon by vote or consensus;
9. Votes on procedural matters are taken on majority votes while all other matters are on two-thirds majority of those present and voting; and,
10. A standing committee, plant committee and animal committee form part of the CITES governing body.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. Monitoring of compliance is done through annual and biennial reports, legislative tests and other special reports submitted to the Secretariat;
2. Parties can communicate to the Secretariat with compliance issues and request time if needed to be compliant;
3. The Standing Committee deliberates on compliance issues and may call upon the Party(ies) to provide further information on compliance. Support to obtain funding to attend such a meeting can be requested from the Secretariat or the Standing Committee;
4. Measure to achieve compliance include providing advice, information and appropriate facilitation of assistance and other capacity-building support to the Party, especially in least developed Countries;
5. Non-detriment finding (NDF) in line with Articles III and IV of the Convention where exports for specimens of species included in Appendices I and II shall be granted only when a scientific authority of the State of export has advised that such export will not be detrimental to the survival of the species;
6. Legal acquisition finding (LAF) in line with Article III, IV, and V where an export permit shall only be granted when a Management Authority of the State of export is satisfied that the specimen was not obtained in contravention to the National Laws;
7. As of 2016, 12 species of sharks and all manta and rays (subclass Elasmobranchii) are included in Appendix II and all species of sawfishes (same subclass) are in Appendix 1;
8. Introduction from the Sea (IFS) is one of the four types of trade regulated under CITES (including import, export and re-export). Specimens taken into a State from the High Seas fall under the IFS category;
9. When a State takes specimen from the high Seas to another state, the import/export provisions apply using the source code X; and,
10. A NDF is needed for the issuance of IFS-certificates.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Support on compliance and enforcement, science and capacity building** from the CITES Secretariat.
2. **Funding:** CITES External Trust Fund (QTL) funds the voluntary programmes/projects activities costs. Parties to the Convention make voluntary contributions to this fund.

3. Programmes implemented by the Secretariat that support Parties with implementation of various aspects of the Convention include:
    a. National Legislation project;
    b. ICCWC – enforcement matters
    c. CITES Tree Species Programme – This programme has come to an end, but a process to consider the feasibility of another phase will be initiated; and,
    d. Compliance procedures and assistance programme – Document discussed at COP 19 and document discussed at COP 18; Standing Committee doc on the compliance assistance programme: Four Countries included in pilot phase of the programme – Guinea, Nigeria, Suriname and Togo.

4. Legal framework model provided covering:
    i. the designation of national CITES authorities;
    ii. prohibition of trade in violation of the Convention;
    iii. Penalisation of illegal trade; and,
    iv. Authorisation to confiscate specimens illegally traded or possessed.

**The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, COP Meetings**

**Purpose:** A Global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.

**Objectives:**
The Parties:

a) should promote, co-operate in and support research relating to migratory species;
b) shall endeavour to provide immediate protection for migratory species included in Appendix I; and,
c) shall endeavour to conclude AGREEMENTS covering the conservation and management of migratory species included in Appendix II.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. The COP meets every three years to discuss new issues, assess conservation progress and negotiate new listings of species in Appendix I and II;
2. Financial contributions modifications are adopted by unanimous vote of the Parties present and voting;
3. Decisions at the meeting of the COP require a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting;
4. Any amendment proposals shall be sent at least 150 days before a meeting and comments for an upcoming meeting shall be submitted at least 60 days before the meeting;
5. Amendments on list of species in Appendices I and II can be made at any ordinary or extraordinary meeting of the COP;
6. No more than four delegates of any Party can be present at a plenary session and sessions of the Committee;
7. Observers wishing to participate from State Parties need approval from the State in which they are located;
8. No more than two observers from any non-Party State, body or agency can be present at plenary or Committee sessions;
9. A standard participation fee of all NGOs is fixed and stated in the invitation letters;
10. Representatives need authorisation from Head of State or Minister of Foreign Affairs;
11. All proposals for discussion must be submitted to the Secretariat at least 150 days before the meeting for circulation to all Parties;
12. Regional Economic Integration Organisations can vote on behalf of their members on condition that the States do not represent themselves;
13. Decision voted upon need at least a two-thirds majority; and,
14. A standing committee and scientific council support the work of the COP.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

- **Agreement to conserve the West African Manatee**
- To improve policy, research and awareness.

- **Gandhinagar declaration** states the need for restoring the ecological connectivity and integrity of ecosystems through Global biodiversity frameworks and cooperation.

- ❖ Recommends the post-2020 Global biodiversity framework call for inclusion in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of Parties' priorities regarding the protection of migratory animals.

- ❖ Recommends local coordination of focal points for CBD, UNFCCC Paris Agreement and other biodiversity related fora to reflect on priorities and align efforts.

- ❖ **Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) for which a** Technical Committee was established comprised of:

  (a) nine experts representing different Regions of the Agreement Area, in accordance with a balanced geographical distribution.
  (b) one representative from the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. (IUCN), one from the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB) and one from the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC).
  (c) one expert from each of the following fields: rural economics, game management, and environmental Law.

- ❖ A Secretariat was established under article VIII of the Agreement.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **International collaboration in conservation of species** that are endangered or require protection that migrate to other territories. This is done through International Agreements for their conservation and management.
2. **Research** on ecology, ecosystems, population dynamics, genetics of relevant listed species with special regard to migration.

**The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands COP Meetings**

**Purpose:** Focuses on the importance of wetlands, fosters partnerships for their conservation and wise use and provides a framework for Countries to designate specific wetlands as Internationally important.

**Objectives:**

Parties commit to:

1. Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands;
2. Designate suitable wetlands for the list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List") and ensure their effective management;
3. Cooperate Internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. Ordinary meetings of the Conference of Parties held every three years (last in 2022);
2. COP Meetings take place in the Country chosen by the previous COP on the basis of a formal invitation by the Head of State of Minister of Foreign Affairs;
3. Extraordinary COP meetings can be convened on the basis of a written request of any contracting Party;
4. Secretariat informs all Contracting Parties of the dates, venue and provisional agenda of an ordinary meeting at least 12 months before the meeting is due to commence;
5. Secretariat informs all Parties at least one month before the Extraordinary meeting;
6. Observers (NGOs, bodies and agencies) that wish to participate in meetings may do so unless one third of the Parties object. Such observers must submit relevant documentation at least three months before the ordinary meeting and one month before an extraordinary meeting. Observers do not have the right to vote.
7. Proposals made by observers may be put to vote if sponsored by Contracting Party;
8. Each Contracting Party is represented by a Head of Delegation, accredited representatives, alternative representatives and advisers whose credentials must be submitted at least 48 hours after the opening of the meeting;
9. A credential committee verifies and approves the delegates;
10. President and Vice President shall be elected and preside over the meetings until new candidates are elected in the next meeting.

11. In addition to the Standing Committee, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel, the Conference Bureau and the COP may establish other committees and working groups and meetings can be held during the same time as the COP meetings were possible;
12. Conference Bureau meets daily over the duration of the meeting to review progress of the meeting;
13. Proposals should be submitted at least 60 days before the opening of the Standing Committee;
14. Decisions are made by consensus but if no Agreement is reached they shall be taken by majority vote of the Contracting Parties present and voting except for the adoption of the budget which requires a two-thirds majority and the adoption of the scale of contributions to the budget which requires unanimity (Article 6.5 and 6.6 of the Convention);
15. **Links with other Conventions:** Ramsar Convention is the lead Partner in the implementation of activities related to wetlands under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD); and,
16. Several subsidiary bodies have been established to support the work of the COP including a standing committee that meets in between COP meetings, a scientific and technical review panel etc.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. The COP endorsed the use of legal and institutional reviews as an integral part of wise planning;
2. National Wetland Committees, Inter-ministerial commissions or other coordinating bodies for wetlands issues should supervise reviews of National Policies;
3. Teams comprising legal expertise, planners and economists, technical representation, e.g. hydrologists, biologists, ecologists, private sector and local communities should be part of the process;
4. Changes made could be in the form of new legislation or provisions made within existing legislation; and,
5. A handbook to guide Parties has been developed and can be obtained here:https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/hbk4-03.pdf.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. Travel support for some participants to COP meetings if available from the Secretariat;
2. **Research:** Contracting Parties can share research, publications, data etc. regarding wetlands and their flora and fauna;
3. **Training:** Contracting Parties shall promote the training of personnel competent in the fields of wetland research, and management;
4. Capacity-building needs of Contracting Parties and other stakeholders in a range of fields, including inventory, wetland management, wetland status monitoring and assessment, communications and promotion of wetlands and wetland values, scientific and technical knowledge and guidance, and knowledge and technology exchange can be addressed collaboratively;
5. **Collaboration:** Contracting Parties, especially. those with shared boundaries/ whose wetlands extend over other territories can co-ordinate and support present and future policies and regulations concerning the conservation of wetlands and their flora and fauna;
6. **International support:** relevant International bodies may be asked by the COP to prepare reports and statistics on matters which are essentially International in character affecting wetlands. IOP status was granted to Birdlife International, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Wetlands International, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and World-wide Fund for Nature (WWF)) which are actively contributing in all the Regions and on a regular basis to the further development of Policies and tools of the Convention and their application at the National and local levels; and,
7. **Funding:** In Collaboration with the Convention of Biological Diversity, funding may be obtained from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

**The World Heritage Committee Meetings**

**Purpose:** The implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the use of the World Heritage Fund and allocations of financial assistance including decisions on whether a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List.

**Objectives:**

1. Strengthen the Credibility of the World Heritage List, as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value;
2. Ensure the effective Conservation of World Heritage properties;

3. Promote the development of effective Capacity-building measures, including assistance for preparing the nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related Instruments;
4. Increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication; and,
5. Enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**

1. World Heritage Committee meets once a year and consists of representatives from 21 State Parties to the Convention elected by their General Assembly;
2. Extraordinary meetings can be held at the request of at least two-thirds of the Members States;
3. Committee sessions are chaired by the Chairperson in consultation with the Director General of UNESCO who notifies Members States of the Committee date, place and provisional agenda at least 60 days before the ordinary session;
4. Each Member State on the Committee is represented by one delegate who may be assisted by alternates, advisers and experts;
5. Request for financial support to patriciate in Bureau and Committee meetings should reach the Secretariat at least 4 weeks before the session. Provision is made to cover at most 2 participants if the budget allows;
6. Advisors from ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN or other organisations may attend meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity;
7. The committee may invite private and public organisations or individuals to participate in sessions for consultations on particular problems;
8. Non-members may attend as observers as well as other organisations who apply at least 15 days before the date of the session of the Committee may be permitted to attend;
9. The Committee may establish subsidiary and consultative bodies as deemed necessary for its functions;
10. Each Member State on the Committee has one vote in the Committee. Decisions of the Committee on matters in the Convention must be taken by two-thirds majority of its members present and voting. Other decisions are taken by majority of the Members States present and voting;
11. Documents relating to the provisional agenda are distributed at least 6 weeks before the beginning of the session;
12. Any State Party in arrears of contributions shall not be eligible to be part of the World Heritage Committee;
13. Any State Party can make a request for assistance for a site that is listed in the World Heritage List. Such request must include information on the operation contemplated, the work that is necessary, the expected cost thereof, the degree of urgency and the reasons why the resources of the State requesting assistance do not allow it to meet all the expenses. Such requests must be supported by experts' reports whenever possible; and,
14. Urgent requests may be made on disasters or natural calamities and funding provided may be from the Committee's emergency reserve fund.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria.

Those related to natural sites include:

- to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; and,
- to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Funding:** Participants (experts in cultural and natural heritage) to Committee meetings and sessions of the Bureau can be covered from a budget allocated by the committee;
2. **Awareness Raising:** The prestige that comes from being a State Party to the Convention and having sites inscribed on the World Heritage List enhances awareness and support for the preservation of heritage sites. The inscription of a site brings an increase in public awareness of the site and of its outstanding values, thus also increasing the tourist activities at the site;
3. **International support:** for elaboration and implementation of comprehensive management plans including establishment of monitoring systems;
4. **Training:** Technical training on management, institutional capacity building etc. provided to State Parties. The World Heritage Committee may also provide International assistance to National and Regional centres for the training of staff and specialists at all levels in the field of identification, protection, conservation, presentation and rehabilitation of heritage sites;
5. **Development of Programmes:** for implementing, preserving or scientific research as needed with funding support from other parties;
6. **Research:** Studies concerning artistic, scientific and technical problems raised by the protection, conservation and presentation and rehabilitation of the heritage site. This includes provision of experts, technicians and skilled labour;
7. **Equipment:** supply of equipment which the State concerned does not possess or is not in a position to acquire; and,
8. **Loans and Grants**: Low-interest or interest-free loans which might be repayable on long-term basis and grants/non-repayable subsidies may be awarded on special cases.

**International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling Commission Meetings**

**Purpose:** The International Whaling Commission was set up for the management of whaling and conservation of whales. It is an inter-governmental organisation with a membership of 88 Governments.

**Objectives:**
Five key areas are covered by the Commission:
- Science.
- Conservation.
- Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling.
- Whale Killing & Welfare issues.
- Infractions and Finance

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**
1. Each Party has a right to appoint one Commissioner and a focal point that should be communicated to the Secretariat;
2. The Commission meetings are biennial (every 2 years) and Countries can propose to host subsequent meetings at least 2 years in advance;
3. Scientific and other committees meet at least biennial while the Bureau shall meet in the years that the Commission does not meet;
4. Observers from non-parties and non-governmental organisation should submit their requests and credentials at least 60 days before the meeting. A registration fee is charged for observers. Observers have speaking rights and can submit documentation for consideration by the Commission;
5. Decisions taken at meetings can only be adopted when all Members of the Commission have received them electronically and when approved by the Commission;
6. Only one vote is exercised per State and Commissioners or appointed representatives may vote;
7. The right to vote of representatives of any Contracting Government is suspended when annual payment including interest due has not been received by the Commission (at least 3 months or a day before the meeting) unless the Commission decides otherwise in the case of exceptional circumstances;
8. Decisions are by consensus or vote;
9. The chair is elected for 2 years and takes office at the end of the Biennial Meetings at which he/she is elected;
10. A vice-chair is elected from time to time from among the Commissioners and presides over the meetings of the Commission and Bureau; and,
11. The Commission has established Scientific, Technical and Finance and Administration Committees.

**Legal and Policy issues:**
- An integral part of the Commission is its legally binding 'Schedule.' The Schedule sets out specific measures that the IWC has collectively decided are necessary in order to regulate whaling and conserve

whale stocks. These measures include catch limits (which may be zero as it the case for commercial whaling) by species and area, designating specified areas as whale sanctuaries, protection of calves and females accompanied by calves, and restrictions on hunting methods;

- ❖ Unlike the Convention, the Schedule can be amended and updated when the Commission meets (a change requires at least three quarters majority agreement);
- ❖ The expenses of each member of the Commission and of his experts and advisers shall be determined and paid by his own Government;
- ❖ The Commission may amend from time to time the provisions of the Schedule by adopting regulations with respect to the conservation and utilization of whale resources, fixing
  - (a) protected and unprotected species;
  - (b) open and closed seasons;
  - (c) open and closed waters, including the designation of sanctuary areas;
  - (d) size limits for each species;
  - (e) time, methods, and intensity of whaling (including the maximum catch of whales to be taken in any one season); (f) types and specifications of gear and apparatus and appliances which may be used;
  - (f) methods of measurement; and
  - (g) catch returns and other statistical and biological records.
- ❖ Any Contracting Government may grant to any of its nationals a special permit authorizing that national to kill, take and treat whales for purposes of scientific research subject to such restrictions as to number and subject to such other conditions as the Contracting Government thinks fit.
- ❖ Each Contracting Government shall take appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention and the punishment of infractions against the said provisions in operations carried out by persons or by vessels under its jurisdiction; and,
- ❖ Note that Seychelles and Egypt have withdrawn from the meetings.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Conservation and preservation** of whales to ensure a Globally healthy population.
2. **Scientific research:** driving a better understanding of whales, stocks and conservation measures that can be put in place to ensure health whale populations in the future.
3. **International collaboration** in conservation efforts.
4. **Support from the commission** who funds conservation work on many species of cetacean. In addition to research, this includes building an International entanglement response capacity, working to prevent ship strikes, and establishment of Conservation Management Plans for key species and populations.
   - General Fund for the financial sustainability of the Commission.
   - Voluntary Funds including:
   - for small cetacean research and conservation; aboriginal subsistence whaling, conservation, Sothern Ocean Research Partnership, to assist participants from (Group 1 & 2) to participate in the work of the Commission and Welfare.

**Meetings of the Parties of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA)**

**Purpose:** To discuss matters relevant to the implementation of the Agreement

**Objectives: T**o prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing through the implementation of effective Port State Measures, and thereby to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources and marine ecosystems.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. **Meetings occur biennially (every 2 years – with an upcoming meeting in May 2023).**
2. Review committees on the progress made against objectives are held every 4 years.
3. A Chairperson and up to five Vice-Chairpersons may be elected of which the First Vice-Chairperson shall be from a FAO Region other than the Region of the Chairperson;
4. Special meetings can be held on demand;
5. Notice of date and venue of the meetings shall be shared at least 10 weeks before the opening of any meeting;
6. Decisions are made by consensus or majority vote;
7. Observers from non-Parties and other organisations are allowed to attend meetings but not participate in decision-making;

8. Funding to attend meetings for developing countries may be provided by the Secretariat or covered by the Government/Organisation attending;
9. Each Party has one vote and if consensus cannot be reached, at least two-thirds majority is needed provided that such majority is more than half of all the Parties;
10. Several bodies have been created including the PSMA Technical Working Group on Information Exchange (TWG-IE); Part 6 Working Group on reporting; PSMA Strategy ad hoc Working group established to develop a strategy to improve the effectiveness of the Agreement; and Regional Coordination Meetings that include Regional Fishery Bodies and non-parties.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

Provision for a coordinated effort in combating IUU in port States and outlines the relationship with International Law and other International Instruments. This is through coordination at National level with mechanisms to cooperate and exchange information at National, Regional and International levels.

Inspections and follow-up actions including levels and priorities for inspection, conduct of inspections, results of inspections, the transmittal of inspection results, electronic exchange of information, training of inspectors, Port State actions following inspection and information on recourse in the Port State all need to be addressed in local legislations.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Exchange of information between/ among Parties** in conjunction with FAO and other relevant Multilateral and intergovernmental initiatives;
2. **Support to developing states to: (a) enhance their ability**, in particular the least-developed among them and small island developing States, to **develop a legal basis and capacity for the implementation of effective Port State Measures;** (b) facilitate their participation in any International organizations that promote the **effective development and implementation of Port State Measures;** and (c) facilitate **technical assistance to strengthen the development and implementation of Port State Measures** by them, in coordination with relevant International mechanisms;
3. **Funding mechanisms to assist developing States** towards: (a) developing National and International Port State Measures; (b) developing and enhancing capacity, including for monitoring, control and surveillance and for training at the National and Regional levels of port managers, inspectors, and enforcement and legal personnel; (c) monitoring, control, surveillance and compliance activities relevant to Port State Measures, including access to technology and equipment; and (d) assisting developing States Parties with the costs involved in any proceedings for the settlement of disputes that result from actions they have taken pursuant to this Agreement;
5. **Boosting fisheries sustainability.** The treaty's main objective is to support sustainable fisheries management. Improving the gathering, verification and exchange of information leads to more accurate assessments of fish stocks and strengthens the monitoring of both National and International waters;
6. **Cost-effectiveness**. At-Sea patrols and aerial surveillance remain necessary but expensive ways to maintain Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) of fisheries. Port controls are safer, less costly and demonstrate a more active approach than conventional MCS methods, reducing the time, effort and resources required for this critical task.
7. **Inter-agency cooperation.** Implementing the PSMA will require government agencies to coordinate their procedures, which will save time and money. This should result in greater compliance with labour, immigration, health, and sanitary laws. Inter-agency cooperation and information-sharing can also boost transparency, limiting opportunities for corruption.
8. **Regional and Global collaboration.** The PSMA creates a framework for information-sharing and collaboration. Regional implementation of port State measures facilitates enforcement efforts across jurisdictions and makes it less economical for operators to land their IUU seafood.
9. **Capacity building.** The agreement facilitates technical and financial assistance to developing nations that ratify or accede to it. Experts are boosting their capacity to integrate Port State Measures with National and Regional fisheries Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance systems, allowing them to recognize IUU fishing more quickly and take adequate enforcement actions.
10. **Market access and investment in the fisheries sector.** By adhering to the PSMA, port States demonstrate that they take their responsibilities seriously and ensure continued access to important markets where Seafood buyers are committed to stopping IUU fishing. Building a reputation as a lawful and transparent Port State can also boost foreign investment, generating demand from well-

intentioned fishers and increased income through port operations and development of associated industries.

**ICCAT - International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, regular meetings of the Commission**

**Purpose:** The Commission is a regional fisheries management organisation that carries out the objectives set forth in the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

**Objectives:** To maintain tuna populations at levels which permit the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes and ensure the effective exploitation of these fishes in a manner consistent with the catch. The commission does this by monitoring and researching populations of nearly thirty fish species and recommending quotas for sustainable utilisation of the species.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. **ICCAT regular meetings are held every two years and a special meeting in alternate years (the next being in 2023).**
2. Several bodies have been established under ICCAT including the Conservation and Management Measures Compliance Committee to address compliance issues and the Permanent Working Group addressing statistics and conservation measures.
3. Other structures include a standing committee on finance and administration, a standing committee on research and statistics, panels, standing working group on dialogue between fisheries scientists and Managers, other groups and the secretariat.
4. The Commission's permanent seat is in Spain and the Commission has an agreement with the Spanish government that recognises its judicial personality.
5. The Spanish government recognises the diplomatic privileges of the ICCAT Chairman, Vice-Chairman and representatives of the Contracting Parties attending meetings.
6. A Chairman is elected at each meeting with a first and second Vice-Chairman.
7. Two-thirds of the Contracting Parties present constitute a quorum.
8. A Council which consists of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman and 4-8 contracting Parties meets every other year between regular meetings.
9. Decisions are taken by majority vote except as provided by Article VIII(1)(b) of the Convention which recommends two-thirds majority of all parties present and voting.
10. ICCAT recommendations take effect 6 months after notification by the Commission and Parties may object within the 6 months period.
11. Meeting dates are published at the beginning of each year.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. Each Party is obligated to contribute annually to the ICCAT budget in an amount calculate according to a scheme provided for in the Financial Regulations and as modified by the Madrid Protocol.
2. The Commission may suspend the voting rights of any Contracting Party whose arrears are greater or equal to the amount due from the preceding two years.
3. ICCAT under Article VIII (1) (a) of the Convention can issue recommendations involving Total Allowable Catch (TAC) limits as well as catch limits for individual Contracting Parties.
4. ICCAT has adopted resolutions and recommendations that require Parties to submit compliance reports and vessel lists. It is an obligation for all ICCAT members to inspect tuna fishing vessels in their ports and report violations to the Commission.
5. ICCAT maintains a number of vessel records including a list of IUU Vessels.
6. States that send delegations of 4-6 representatives of their own accord cannot access funding from the Secretariat.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Funding:** e.g. participant funding to attend meetings and data funds - Protocols to follow for the use of data funds and other ICCAT Funds: Three large groups are considered: Improvement of Statistics, Capacity Building, and Supporting Work of the Standing Committee Research and Statistics:
2. Improvement of statistics: The improvement of statistics can be considered at various levels:
   2.1 Recovery of historical data. The reconstruction of historical data series is fundamental, both for the

overall assessment of the resources, and for the analysis of fishery dynamics. This section would include:
– Data searches and incorporations from various sources.
– Computerization of the data (e.g., logbooks) which are available in other formats (in paper copy, etc.).
– Data analysis, including sampling systems, observer programs, etc.
2.2 Development of support material. Sampling and observer programs require additional information such as observer manuals, species identification sheets, etc. The funds could be used for the preparation and publication of this material.
2.3 Development of programs for data entry and processing. The development of data entry and processing programs is essential and the funds should finance this work.

3. **Capacity Building**: 3.1 Develop training programs structured by levels and impart training courses.
   3.2 Develop supporting learning materials (manuals, applications, web pages, etc.). This section could include both the development of specific applications such as the payment of fees for the use of the material already developed, as well as potential expenses linked to a tutorial in training modules.
   3.3 Exchange of scientists between research centres. In 2011, for the first time, a scientist from a developing country spent training time at the IRD-IFREMER centre in Sète.
   3.4 Finance the participation at the SCRS meetings of scientists from countries which do not have their own means to support the participation of this scientist in the meetings.
4. **Support the work of the Standing Committee Research and Statistics**: 4.1 Contracting experts to develop models, analysis, data preparatory work, and/or participate in the assessments.
   4.2 Financing the participation of external experts at the Standing Committee Research and Statistics meetings.

**Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**

**Purpose:** To elaborate the text of an Internationally legally binding Instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond National jurisdiction with a view of developing the Instrument as soon as possible.

**Objectives:** To address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond National jurisdiction, e.g. marine genetic resources, sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of procedure:**

1. The Conference is held at least annually or twice a year (next in 2023);
2. A Preparatory Committee was established by resolution 69/292 and four sessions have already been held;
3. A working group which has been initially been constituted to study issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of National jurisdiction held nine sessions between 2006 and 2015;
4. The Conference is open to all State Members of the UN;
5. Other entities can participate as observers;
6. Country representatives must be accredited/nominated by the Head of State or Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
7. Official languages include English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Russian and Chinese;
8. Documentation is provided electronically and participants are urged to bring their own devices; and,
9. One representative per delegation designated by their Government can receive travel funding support. Details on application process are available: https://www.un.org/oceancapacity/bbnjtf.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **While the Instrument is under development, State Parties are negotiating on the four elements:**
   i. marine genetic resources including benefit sharing.
   ii. area-based management tools including marine protected areas.
   iii. environmental impact assessments.
   iv. capacity building and transfer of marine technologies.
2. On marine genetic resources and benefit sharing, delegates have made progress on application and activities on marine genetic resources and diverging views exist on access and benefit sharing, monetary benefit-sharing and intellectual property rights.
3. On environmental impact assessments, delegations have made progress on planned/proposed activities and differences remain on decision making, thresholds and an area versus impact based approach.

4. A committee on capacity building and technology transfer for marine technologies was agreed upon.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. A voluntary trust fund was established to assist the least developed Countries, land-locked Countries and Small Island Developing States to attend meetings of the Preparatory Committee and the intergovernmental conference; and,
2. Training under the Nippon Foundation Training Programme can be obtained by Member States to reinforce capacity in the context of the Intergovernmental Conference.

**Committee of Fisheries (COFI)**

**Purpose:**

- To review and consider the issues and challenges related to fisheries and aquaculture;
- Review the work programmes of the organisation in the field of fisheries, and their implementation;
- Review specific matters relating to fisheries referred to the Committee by the Council or the Director-General and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- Consider the desirability of preparing and submitting to Member Nations an International Convention under Article XIV of the Constitution to ensure effective International cooperation and consultation in fisheries on a world scale; and,
- Report to the Council and Director-General or advice as appropriate on matters considered by the Committee.

**Objectives:** To provide periodic Global recommendations and Policy advice to Governments, Regional Fisheries Bodies, civil society organisations, private sector and the International community.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. **Meetings are held every 2 years.**
2. Official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
3. Each meeting selects a Chairperson, a first Vice-Chairperson and five other Vice-Chairpersons from the representatives of its members, one from Africa.
4. Observers from non-Member States, International organisations are allowed unless voted otherwise by the Members present and voting.
5. Each Member has one vote.
6. Subsidiary bodies may be established. Existing sub-committees include, Sub-Committee on Fish Trade; Sub-Committee on Aquaculture. A working group has been established on the proposal of the establishment of the sub-committee on fisheries management.
7. Rules of Procedure are similar to those of other UN agencies.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. In an effort to implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, COFI called on Countries to endorse the first Voluntary Guidelines for Transhipment – an Instrument that provides standards to apply in Policies and Regulations;
2. The 35th Session discusses the development of Sustainable Aquaculture Guidelines – an Instrument that leverages the sector's potential to sustainably supply the Global demand on aquatic foods from a growing population; and,
3. FAO requested to support Members in developing legal frameworks and multi-stakeholder collaborations to promote market access for small-scale fisheries and investigate possibility for traceability and certification systems for them.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. A unique forum for addressing International fisheries issues;
1. Promoting ecosystem-based fisheries management and combating IUU fishing;
2. Promotion of the implementation of various FAO Agreements including;
    i. Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing; Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas etc;

3. Developing International plans of action for Sharks, Seabirds, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing;
4. Capacity building and technical support to developing Countries;
5. Technology transfer in all aspects of fisheries;
6. Establishing or strengthening institutional arrangements;
7. Harmonisation of activities of Regional fishery bodies; and,
8. Dissemination of information, particularly on management techniques.

**Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Plenary meetings**

**Purpose:** An intergovernmental science-Policy platform/body to strengthen the science-Policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Objectives:**

1. Assessments on specific themes, methodology issues at Regional and Global levels;
2. Policy support;
3. Capacity building and knowledge; and,
4. Communication and outreach.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. Plenary meetings are held every year;
2. Bureau comprises the IPBES Chair, four Vice-Chairs and five additional officers to oversee the administrative function of IPBES. They assess credentials during the Plenary meetings;
3. Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP) oversee the scientific and technical functions and represent the five UN Regions;
4. Expert Groups and Taskforces comprise selected scientists and knowledge holders who carry out IPBES assessments and other deliverables; and,
5. Rules of procedure similar to other UNEP procedures which include that each member has one vote and Regional Economic Communities can represent their members if they do not vote. Decisions are made by consensus or majority vote or two-thirds vote of all present and voting. Observers are allowed unless decided otherwise by majority vote and the official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **Nature's contribution to people conceptual framework that includes six interlinked elements could support policy frameworks and guidelines. The six elements are:**
    i. nature,
    ii. nature's contribution to people,
    iii. anthropogenic assets;
    iv. institutions and governance systems and other indirect drivers of change;
    v. drivers of change,
    vi. good quality life;
2. Assessments conducted on ecosystem services including one done for Africa support science-based decision making;
3. Nominated focal points provide reports to the Secretariat to facilitate interactions between Governments and IPBES.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. International collaborations on research, assessments and Policy support;
2. Capacity building opportunities;
3. Knowledge sharing including support in developing new methodologies; and,
4. Awareness raising and outreach opportunities.

*Table 2: International fora or regime on aquatic environment including pollution issues*

**Meeting of State Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (SPLOS)** covering four conventions and an optional protocol: the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone (CTS); the Convention on the High Seas (CHS); the Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas (CFCLR); the Convention on the Continental Shelf (CCS); and the Optional Protocol of Signature concerning the Compulsory Settlement of Disputes (OPSD)

**Purpose:** To Convene necessary meetings in accordance with the Convention.

**Objectives:**

1. The Meeting elects the members of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea – this takes place every 3 years and encompasses election of one third of the members.

2. The Meeting elects members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf – election of all 21 members takes place every 5 years.

3. The Meeting considers the budget of the Tribunal and other administrative matters annually.

4. It considers information from the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority and the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and information of State Parties on issues that may have risen with respect to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of procedure:**

1. Meetings of State Parties are convened as and when the Secretary-General deems it fit, unless a request is made by a State Party and other States concur. Meetings for elections are held every 3 years (Tribunal) and 5 years (Commission).
2. **A State Party which is in arrears** in the payment of its financial contributions to the Authority shall have no vote if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the member.
3. **A State Party which has grossly and persistently violated** the provisions of this Part may be suspended from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership by the Assembly upon the recommendation of the Council.
4. **States shall corporate on a Global or Regional basis** as applicable in formulating and elaborating rules, standards and recommended practices and procedure consistent with the Convention. States shall establish appropriate scientific criteria for the formulation and elaboration of Rules, Standards and recommended practices and procedures for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution of the marine environment.
5. **Membership in the Council for decision making:** provision is made for six members from among developing State Parties representing special interests to be part of the Council with each member of the Council having one vote.
6. A provisional agenda shall be shared with State Parties and Observers at least 45 days before the opening of the Meeting.
7. Urgent matters for discussion can be added at least 30 days before the meeting.
8. Each State Party is to be represented by accredited representatives.
9. The Meeting shall elect a President and four Vice-Presidents, one from each Region (excluding the Region of the President).
10. These represent the bureau who meet regularly to review the progress of work and to make recommendations for furthering such progress.
11. Meeting languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
12. Statements can be made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President and Registrar of the International Tribunal and the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority.
13. Each Party has one vote.
14. The Meeting of State Parties shall decide on the terms and the manner in which State Parties and the International Seabed Authority shall contribute to the expenses of the International Tribunal.
15. The Meeting of State Parties shall consider and approve the proposed periodic budget of the International Tribunal submitted by the Tribunal.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **The International Seabed Authority (a dedicated section on this authority meetings is provided below):** All members of the UN Law of the Seas and the EU are part of the Authority whose mandate is to regulate and control all mineral-related activities in the International seabed area for the benefits of mankind.
    - It comprises the Assembly which establishes the general Policies, elects members of the Council, sets the two-year budget, approves Rules, Regulations and Procedures and examines reports.
    - The Council consists of 36 members elected by the Assembly
    - The Legal and Technical Commission is an organ of the Council that consists of 41 members who are elected by the Council for a period of 5 years (starting 1 January 2023).
    - The Finance Committee oversees the financing and financial management of the International Seabed Authority.
    - The Secretariat is based in Jamaica and headed by the Secretary-General.
2. **The International Tribunal for the Law of the** Sea (ITLOS) is an independent judicial body that has jurisdiction over any disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention and all matters specifically provided for in any other Agreements which confers jurisdiction on the Tribunal. Disputes relating to management of the living resources of the Sea, protection and preservation of marine environment and marine scientific research.
3. 21 independent members are elected as part of the Tribunal (current President is from South Africa).

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Policy framework:** Support in developing policy frameworks in relation to the use and conservation of marine resources, particularly migratory species and those in shared territories;
2. **Collaborative Scientific Research:** Makes provision for Parties to collaborate in scientific research including data collection and monitoring for setting quotas and better management of marine resources;
3. **Technology transfer:** makes provision for technology and equipment transfer to better manage territorial waters or for research in a fair manner with consideration to developing States;
4. **Funding:** Access to funding from International Organisations and other donors for programs including the management and conservation of marine resources. To access this funding, scientific data is needed as part of the program or project development process;
5. **Preferential treatment for developing States:** Developing States shall, for the purposes of prevention, reduction and control of pollution of the marine environment or minimization of its effects, be granted preference by International organizations in:
    i. the allocation of appropriate funds and technical assistance; and,
    ii. the utilization of their specialized services;
6. **Scientific and technical assistance to developing States** - States shall, directly or through competent International Organizations:
   (a)promote programmes of scientific, educational, technical and other assistance to developing States for the protection and preservation of the marine environment and the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution. Such assistance shall include, inter alia;
   (i) training of their scientific and technical personnel,
   (ii) facilitating their participation in relevant international programmes,
   (iii) supplying them with necessary equipment and facilities,
   (iv) enhancing their capacity to manufacture such equipment, and;
   (v) advice on and developing facilities for research, monitoring, educational and other programmes;
   (b) provide appropriate assistance, especially to developing States, for the minimization of the effects of major incidents which may cause serious pollution of the marine environment; and,
   (c) provide appropriate assistance, especially to developing States.

**International Maritime Organisation Council, Assembly and Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC); Maritime Safety Committee meetings**

**Purpose:** Established in 1948 by a Convention to improve safety, security and reduce pollution from ships in the marine environment.

**Objectives:** Safe, Secure and efficient Shipping on clean Oceans.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

a. IMO is a UN agency based in UK with 170 Member States and 3 associated members;
b. The governing body is the Assembly which meets once every 2 years;
c. A Council comprised of 40 elected Member States acts as IMO's governing body between session. They meet several times a year;
d. A Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) was established to deal with ship safety and security matters including piracy and armed robbery;
e. A Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) coordinates activities on the prevention and control of pollution from ships;
f. Seven subcommittees have been established: on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping; Implementation of IMO Instruments; navigation, communication and search and rescue, pollution prevention and response; Ship design and construction; Ship systems and Equipment; Carriage of Cargoes and Containers;
g. Other committees include the legal committee, technical co-operation committee (particularly supporting developing Countries) and the facilitation committee to reduce and simplify documentation required of ships when entering and leaving ports. These can provide support to Member States upon request.
h. Members in the Assembly have one vote; and,
i. Rules and Procedures are similar to CDB COP.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. IMO has set a limit for sulphur in fuel oil used on board ships of 0.50% m/m (mass by mass) that came into effect on 1 January 2020 as decided during MEPC 70 and under Annex VI of MARPOL Convention;
2. MARPOL Amendments includes a ban to heavy fuel oil from Antarctic and a new North American Emission Control Area. Regulation 43 prohibits both carriage in bulk as cargo and carriage and use as fuel, of: crude oils with a density higher than 900 kg/m3 at 15°C; oils, other than crude oils, with a density higher than 900 kg/m3 at 15°C, or a kinematic viscosity higher than 180 mm2/s at 50°C; or bitumen, tar and their emulsions. Therefore, all ships trading to or transiting the Antarctic Area, defined as "the Sea area south of latitude 60°S", will need to switch to a different type of fuel;
3. MARPOL Annex VI Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships (entered into force 19 May 2005) Sets limits on sulphur oxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from ship exhausts and prohibits deliberate emissions of ozone depleting substances; designated emission control areas set more stringent standards for SOx, NOx and particulate matter. A chapter adopted in 2011 covers mandatory technical and operational energy efficiency measures aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ships;
4. The Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments D-2 standard as approved in the amendment requires that ships only discharge ballast water that meets the following criteria:
    i. less than 10 viable organisms per cubic metre which are greater than or equal to 50 micrometres in minimum dimension,
    ii. less than 10 viable organisms per millilitre which are between 10 micrometres and 50 micrometres in minimum dimension,
    iii. less than 1 colony-forming unit (CFU) per 100 milliliters of Toxicogenic Vibrio cholerae
    iv. less than 250 cfu per 100 milliliters of Escherichai Coli; and,
    v. less than 100 cfu per 100 milliliters of Intestinal Enterococci;
5. D-2 standards will be phased in up to 8 September 2024; and,
6. In 2021, the MEPC adopted amendments to include controls on the biocide cybutryne. The amendments enter into force on 1 January 2023. Ships shall not apply or re-apply anti-fouling systems containing this substance from 1 January 2023. Ships shall remove or apply a coating to AFS with this substance at the next scheduled renewal of the anti-fouling system after 1 January 2023, but no later than 60 months following the last application to the ship of an anti-fouling system containing cybutryne.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

**Funding:** A recent Council decision approved support for developing least participating Countries to be funded to attend some of the important meetings hosted by IMO.

1. **International Cooperation:** Contracting Parties agree to co-operate in the development of procedures for the effective application of this Protocol in areas beyond the jurisdiction of any State, including procedures for the reporting of vessels and aircraft observed dumping or incinerating at sea in contravention of this Protocol.

2. **Regional Cooperation**: Contracting Parties with common interests to protect the marine environment in a given geographical area shall endeavour, considering characteristic Regional features, to enhance Regional co-operation including the conclusion of Regional Agreements consistent with this Protocol for the prevention, reduction and where practicable elimination of pollution caused by dumping or incineration at Sea of wastes or other matter. Contracting Parties shall seek to co-operate with the Parties to Regional Agreements in order to develop harmonized procedures to be followed by Contracting Parties to the different Conventions concerned.
3. **Training of scientific and technical personnel** for research, monitoring and enforcement, including as appropriate the supply of equipment and facilities with a view to strengthening National capabilities. **Information sharing and technical co-operation:** on waste minimisation and clean production process and on the disposal and treatment of waste and other measures to prevent, reduce and where practicable eliminate pollution caused by dumping.
4. **Access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies** and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing Countries and Countries in transition to market economies, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, considering the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries and countries in transition to market economies.
5. **Coordinated effort in reporting incidents involving harmful substances:** Each Party to the Convention undertakes to issue instructions to its maritime inspection vessels and aircraft and to other appropriate services, to report to its authorities any incident referred to it Protocol 1 to the present Convention. That Party shall, if it considers it appropriate, report accordingly to the Organisation and to any other party concerned.

**Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Triple COP**

**Purpose: Bringing together the three leading Multilateral Environmental Agreements that share the common objective of protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes.**

**Objectives:** To coordinate efforts in addressing issues of waste, hazardous chemicals and persistent organic pollutants.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. **Ordinary meetings of the COP are held every second year (next meeting in May 2023).**
2. Official languages of the meetings are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
3. Each Party has one vote and Regional economic integration organisations on matters within its competence can represent and vote on behalf of all its members provided the other Parties do not vote.
4. Decisions are by consensus or vote either majority vote or two-thirds majority depending on the issue under consideration.
5. One President and nine vice-presidents (one of whom shall act as Rapporteur) are elected to serve the term until the next meeting when new candidates are voted in.
6. The Bureau of any meeting shall examine the credentials and report to the COP.
7. Subsidiary bodies of the three Instruments hold meetings in synergy, e.g. The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee and Chemical Review Committee, the Implementation and Compliance Committee.
8. One bureau with members covering the three Instruments supports the work of the President.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **A**ny person who wishes to export, import or transit hazardous wastes will require a permit from the relevant National competent authority for Basel Convention. The authority will only issue a permit for the export, import or transit of the hazardous waste if it is satisfied that the competent authorities of the relevant Countries have given their consent for the movement;
2. Any person who contravenes the relevant sub-sections shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction. The scope of the Basel Convention includes wastes that are defined as, or are considered to be, hazardous wastes by the domestic legislation of the Party of export, import or transit;
3. Under Article 3 of the Basel Convention, Parties are to inform the Secretariat of the Convention of the wastes, other than those listed in Annexes I and II, considered or defined as hazardous under its National legislation and or any requirements concerning transboundary movement procedures applicable to such wastes;

4. The Stockholm Convention, which currently regulates 29 POPs, requires parties to adopt a range of control measures to reduce and, where feasible, eliminate the release of POPs. For intentionally produced POPs, Parties must prohibit or restrict their production and use, subject to certain exemptions such as the continued use of DDT;
5. The Stockholm Convention also requires parties to restrict trade in such substances. For unintentionally produced POPs, the Stockholm Convention requires Countries to develop National action plans to address releases and to apply "Best Available Techniques" to control them. The Stockholm Convention also aims to ensure the sound management of stockpiles and wastes that contain POPs.
6. The Rotterdam Convention establishes a prior informed consent ("PIC") procedure to ensure that restricted hazardous chemicals are not exported to Countries that do not wish to receive them. The PIC procedure does not ban or restrict any chemicals, nor does it mean that any individual Country must automatically prohibit their import. Parties implement the PIC procedure through extensive information exchange, priority attention to National decisions on imports, and obligations related to export controls.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Improved use of available resources** through more coordinated National frameworks, institutional mechanisms and enforcement capacity dealing with chemicals and wastes;
2. **Raised profile of the issue at the National and International levels** which can result in increased resources to support chemicals and waste management programmes;
3. **Better coordinated technical assistance activities** and better use of resources to support developing Countries and Countries with economies in transition to implement the Conventions;
4. **More integrated approach towards sound chemicals and wastes management** and the opportunity to mainstream those issues into National development plans;
5. **More cost-effective implementation** of the Conventions through synergistic efforts.

**Minamata Convention on Mercury COP Meetings**

**Purpose:** Established in pursuant to Article 23 of the Convention to advance the implementation of the Convention while reviewing and evaluating progress.

**Objectives:** The objective is to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. **Ordinary meetings of the COP are every 2 years.**
2. The COP is supported by a Bureau consisting of a President and nine Vice-Presidents (one a Rapporteur).
3. Each of the 5 UN Regional groups is represented by 2 Bureau members.
4. An Implementation and Compliance Committee to promote implementation and review compliance was established.
5. Observers are permitted to participate but not take decisions.
6. Each party has one vote.
7. A Regional economic integration organisation can vote on behalf of its members if members are not voting.
8. Decisions are made by consensus or two-thirds majority.
9. Official languages are Arabic, Chinese, French, Russia, Spanish and English.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

- Every four years, starting in 2021, national reports on the measures taken by Countries to implement the Minamata Convention are required. They include information on the effectiveness of these measures.
- Any State or Regional economic integration organization may register for one or more exemptions from the phase-out dates listed in Annex A and Annex B, hereafter referred to as an "exemption", by notifying the Secretariat in writing:
  (a) On becoming a Party to this Convention; or
  (b) In the case of any mercury-added product that is added by an amendment to Annex A or any

manufacturing process in which mercury is used that is added by an amendment to Annex B, no later than the date upon which the applicable amendment enters into force for the Party.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Funding** through Multilateral, Regional and Bilateral sources of financial and technical assistance. A Mechanism for the provision of adequate, predictable, and timely financial resources is defined. The Mechanism is to support developing Country Parties and Parties with economies in transition in implementing their obligations under this Convention. Mechanism shall include the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund
2. **Capacity-building** - a specific international Programme to support capacity-building and technical assistance. Parties shall cooperate to provide, within their respective capabilities, timely and appropriate capacity-building and technical assistance to developing Country Parties, in particular Parties that are least developed Countries or small island developing States, and Parties with economies in transition, to assist them in implementing their obligations under this Convention. Capacity building may be delivered through Regional, sub-regional and National arrangements.
3. **Technology transfer** - Developed Country Parties and other Parties within their capabilities shall promote and facilitate, supported by the private sector and other relevant stakeholders as appropriate, development, transfer and diffusion of, and access to, up-to-date environmentally sound alternative technologies to developing Country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, and Parties with economies in transition, to strengthen their capacity to effectively implement this Convention.
4. **Support to national health systems** - Promote the development and implementation of strategies and programmes to identify and protect populations at risk, particularly vulnerable populations, and which may include adopting science-based health guidelines relating to the exposure to mercury and mercury compounds, setting targets for mercury exposure reduction, where appropriate, and public education, with the participation of public health and other involved sectors.
5. **Information exchange** - Scientific, technical, economic and legal information concerning mercury and mercury compounds, including toxicological, ecotoxicological and safety information.
6. **Public information, awareness and education** - education, training and public awareness related to the effects of exposure to mercury and mercury compounds on human health and the environment in collaboration with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and vulnerable populations.
7. **Research, development and monitoring** - collaboration to develop and improve research efforts including modelling, harmonisation of methodologies etc. to protect human and environmental health.

**Regular meetings of the governing bodies of the IOPC Fund - the 1969 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (1969 Civil Liability Convention) and the 1971 International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution (1971 Fund Convention)**

**Purpose:** To fulfil the requirements set out under Article 18 of the 1992 Fund Convention and Article 16 of the Supplementary Fund Protocol. The governing bodies give instructions concerning the administration of the Funds to the Director and to supervise the execution of the Convention.

**Objectives:**

1. To ensure that prompt and equitable payment of compensation to victims of oil pollution damage can be achieved;
2. To provide compensation for pollution damage to the extent that the protection afforded by the 1969 Civil Liability Convention is inadequate;
3. To give relief to shipowners in respect of the additional financial burden imposed on them by the 1969 Civil Liability Convention, such relief being subject to conditions designed to ensure compliance with safety at Sea and other Conventions; and,
4. To give effect to the related purposes set out in the Convention.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. The Governing bodies meet two or three times a year;
2. The governing bodies are:
    i. Assemblies and Administrative Councils,

ii. Executive Committee to take decisions on compensation of claims etc. and make recommendations to the Assembly and Working Groups; and,
iii. Chairs;

3. Meetings are held at the IMO headquarters in London;
4. An Intersessional Working Group was established by the Assembly to examine the general criteria for the admissibility of claims for compensation for pollution damage and preventative measures;
5. Observers may be invited to Assembly meetings and participate without voting and with access to non-confidential information;
6. Official working languages are English, Spanish and French;
7. Decisions are made by majority vote of those present and voting;
8. Each Member has one vote and only State Parties can participate;
9. The Executive Committee holds sessions in conjunction with sessions of the Assembly. Similar rules of procedure to the Assembly apply; and,
10. Supplementary Fund Assembly holds has similar rules of procedure to the Fund Assembly.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **Claims can be made based on the criteria set out in the report of the 7th Intersessional Working Group.**
2. Annual contributions to the fund are paid annually and calculated in line with Article 12.2 of the 1992 Fund Convention which is due on 1 March of each year
3. Interest is charged on unpaid annual contributions at a rate that is 2% higher than the lowest London clearing bank base rate over a 12 month period.
4. Each Party submits contributing oil receipts annually.
5. Credit facilities to deal with oil damages can be provided upon request.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Payment of claims for Countries, local authorities, individuals, businesses** who suffer pollution damage caused by oil transported by a tanker can claim compensation from the shipowner/insurer, the 1992 Fund and if applicable, the Supplementary Fund.
2. **Assistance with correct implementation of the Convention.**
3. **Delivery of National and Regional workshops** on the International liability and compensation regime, including claims and oil reporting.
4. **Delivery of annual short course** for participants nominated by Member States.
5. **Delivery of lectures, presentations and papers** at conferences, exhibitions and educational institutions.

**Sessions of the International Seabed Authority**

**Purpose:** To organise, regulate and control all mineral-related activities in the International Seabed area for the benefit of mankind as a whole.

**Objectives:** To ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-Seabed related activities.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. Regular sessions/ meetings are held annually;
2. Special sessions can be convened as and when needed by any member of the Authority;
3. At the beginning of a regular session, a President and four Vice-Presidents are elected;
4. The President and Vice-Presidents constitute the Bureau that meets periodically throughout each session to review progress of the Assembly;
5. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages of the Assembly;
6. Each member has one vote;
7. Decisions in the Assembly are by consensus or vote (majority/two-thirds majority of the members present and voting);
8. Observers are permitted on condition that they do not vote;
9. Several organs are in place:
   i. The Assembly which is the supreme organ comprised of 167 Member States + the European Union,

ii. The Finance Committee with 15 members including the 5 largest contributors

10. The Council: Group A – major consumers(4); Group B – major investors (4); Group C- major exporters (4) (South Africa included); Group D – Developing States and special interests (6) (Lesotho and Uganda included); Group E – equitable geographic representatives (18) - other African Member States included.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

States Parties are forbidden from implanting or placing on the seabed or ocean floor or in the subsoil thereof, beyond a 12-mile territorial zone, any nuclear weapons or any other types of weapons of mass destruction or structures, launching installations, or any other facilities specifically designed for storing, testing, or using such weapons. It allows for verification through observation by the States Parties of the activities of other States Parties, provided that observation does not interfere with such activities. If after such observation reasonable doubts remain, further procedures for verification may be agreed upon, including inspections. After completion of the further procedures for verification, an appropriate report shall be circulated to other Parties by the Party that initiated such procedures.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Protection of the Seabed, the Ocean floor and the subsoils from disruptive weapons.**
2. **Protection of mankind from nuclear weapons**

**Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols**

**Purpose:** To make decisions on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols.

**Objectives:** The aim is for all Contracting Parties to take all appropriate measures to prevent, abate and eliminate to the fullest extent possible pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by dumping of wastes or other matter.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**

1. **The 22 Contracting Parties meet every 2 years.**
2. A rotating Bureau of six representatives from the Contracting Parties in their personal capacity provides guidance on the implementation of the Programme of Work.
3. The Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), established under Article 4 of the Convention is an advisory body to the Contracting Parties on integrating environmental issues in their socioeconomic programmes and to promote policies on sustainable development. It comprises, Non-Governmental Organisations, local authorities, scientists, parliamentarians, government etc. It coordinates the preparation of the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD).
4. The Compliance Committee facilitates and promote compliances of all Contracting Parties.
5. Rules and Procedures of meetings are similar to those of other UN systems.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **A Mediterranean Trust Fund was established to ensure the effective coordination and funding of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) activities.**
2. Contracting Parties contribute to the Fund on a mutually agreed scale and other contributions are also received from selected non-governmental sources and supporting organisations.
3. MAP Coordinating Unit under UNEP provides secretariat services to the Contracting Parties on the basis of a host Country Agreement between UNEP and Greece.
4. Five compliance procedures are defined that guide the work of the compliance committee, i) Party, Secretariat or compliant committee trigger, ii) Self-trigger procedure, iii) Party-to-Party trigger procedure, iv) Secretariat trigger procedure and v) Committee trigger procedure.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1) **Projects to reduce the most significant pollution sources** focussing on industrial emissions, municipal waste e and urban waste water, responsible for up to 80% of pollution in the Mediterranean Sea.
2) **Capacity-building** measures to help neighbouring countries create National environmental administrations that are able to develop and police environmental Laws.

3) Using the Commission's **Research** budget to develop and share knowledge of environmental issues relevant to the Mediterranean.
4) **Developing indicators** to monitor the success of Horizon 2020.

*Table 3: International fora or regime on climate change*

**Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer**

**Purpose:** Support by the Ozone Secretariat (in Nairobi) under the UNEP, the purpose is to facilitate Parties to the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol and other stakeholders to implement actions to protect and heal the ozone layer.

**Objectives:**

COP Shall:

1. Review scientific information;
2. Promote the harmonisation of appropriate policies, strategies and measures;
3. Decide on reporting procedures;
4. Adopt programmes for research and systematic observations;
5. Consider and adopt protocols and amendments; and,
6. Establish subsidiary bodies.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/rules of procedure:**

1. COP meetings are held jointly with MOP meetings every 3 years;
2. MOP meetings to the Montreal Protocol are held annually;
3. The Bureau of the Conference of Parties is comprised of the President, 3 Vice-Presidents and a Rapporteur elected by each COP and holds a maximum of two meetings between COP meetings;
4. The Bureau reviews scientific information on the ozone layer among other functions;
5. The Ozone Research Managers meet every three years to review National and International research and monitoring programmes. It consists of research managers from different Governments;
6. Parties contribute to the Trust Fund of the Convention as agreed in each COP meeting. This is voluntary. In addition, a Multilateral Fund for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol was established which is funded by developed Countries;
7. An additional Trust Fund for Research and Systematic Observation for developing Countries was established and is overseen by the Advisory Committee;
8. The Open-ended Working Group which is a subsidiary body to the MOP meets every year and all Parties to the Protocol attend;
9. Three panels were established, the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), the Scientific Assessment Panel (SAP) and the Environmental Effects Assessment Panel (EEAP) under Montreal Protocol; and,
10. Rules of procedure are similar to CBD COP.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. The Kigali amendment has added non-ozone depleting but highly potent Global-warming HFC chemicals to the list of controlled substances;
2. MOP may take decisions on the adjustment of the control measures of controlled substances and proposals for adjustments must be communicated to the secretariat at least 6 months before a MOP;
3. Essential-use exemptions are available after phase-out dates of various substances with respect to CFCs, halogens etc. Obligations to phase-out apply except if an exception is made by the MOP;
4. Critical-use exemptions relating to phase-out steps under the control measures for methyl bromide. Parties submit nominations for critical-use exemptions which are considered by the Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee; and,
5. Compliance issues are addressed by the MOP with recommendations and draft decisions made.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. International collaboration in research and systematic observations;
2. **Cooperation with competent International bodies** to consider National legislation and relevant ongoing activities at both the National and International levels, joint or complementary programmes for systematic observations of the state of the ozone layer and other relevant parameters;
3. **Co-operation in ensuring the collection, validation and transmission of research and observational data** through appropriate world data centres in a regular and timely fashion;
4. **Co-operation in acquisition of alternative technologies** by other Parties;
5. **Provision of information on alternative technologies and equipment**, and supply of special manuals or guides to them;
6. **Supply of necessary equipment and facilities** for research and systematic observations;
7. **Appropriate training of scientific and technical personnel.** Support by International Parties to **develop the capacity** to fulfil the obligations of the Parties;
8. **Funding through International cooperation with developed Countries and through a Multilateral Fund** that shall:
    (a) Meet, on a grant or concessional basis as appropriate, and according to criteria to be decided upon by the Parties, the agreed incremental costs;
    (b) Finance clearing-house functions to:
    (i) Assist Parties operating under paragraph 1 of Article 5, through country specific studies and other technical cooperation, to identify their needs for co-operation;
    (ii) Facilitate technical co-operation to meet these identified needs;
    (iii) Distribute, as provided for in Article 9, information and relevant materials, and hold workshops, training sessions, and other related activities, for the benefit of Parties that are developing Countries; and
    (iv) Facilitate and monitor other Multilateral, Regional and Bilateral co-operation available to Parties that are developing Countries;
    (c) Finance the secretarial services of the Multilateral Fund and related support costs.
9. **Research, development, public awareness and exchange of information** on
    (a) best technologies for improving the containment, recovery, recycling, or destruction of controlled substances or otherwise reducing their emissions;
    (b) possible alternatives to controlled substances, to products containing such substances, and to products manufactured with them; and
    (c) costs and benefits of relevant control strategies.
10. **Transfer of technology** to ensure:
    **(a)** that the best available, environmentally safe substitutes and related technologies are expeditiously transferred to Parties operating under paragraph 1 of Article 5; and
    **(b)** that the transfers referred to in subparagraph (a) occur under fair and most favourable conditions.

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP meetings, CMP for the Kyoto Protocol and CMA for the Paris Agreement**

**Purpose:** Conference of the Parties is a decision-making body of the Convention that reviews the implementation of the Convention and other legal Instruments that the COP adopts and takes decision on.

**Objectives:** The COP reviews the National communications and emissions inventories submitted by the Parties to assess the effects of the measures taken by Parties.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**

- **The COP meets yearly unless otherwise decided.**
- Several governing bodies have been established for the intergovernmental process
    - In addition to the COP, the meeting of Parties CMP to the Kyoto Protocol constituting the States that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and COP; the meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) who are also COP.
- The Bureau of the COP, CMP and CMA supports the work of the governing bodies through the provision of advice and guidance.
- The UNFCCC Secretariat created in 1945 under a Charter.
- Other subsidiary bodies include:

- Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)
- Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)

❖ Constituted bodies include:
- Adaptation Committee
- Supervisory Body – a 12 member body established under the Paris Agreement
- Adaptation Fund Board that supervises and manages the adaptation fund.

❖ Advisory board of the climate technology centre and network (CTCN)
- Clean Development Mechanisms Executive Board
- Compliance Committee that provides advice and assistance to Parties in the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.
- Consultative Group of Experts to support developing Countries fulfil their reporting requirements.
- Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanisms for Loss and Damage to guide the implementation of the functions of the Warsaw International Mechanisms for Loss and Damage.
- Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee

❖ Katowice Committee of Experts on the impacts of the implementation of response measures
- Least Developed Countries Expert Group (yet to be constituted) and serves the Paris Agreement in the preparation and implementation strategies of National adaptation programmes of action.
- Facilitative working group of the local communities and indigenous people platform.
- Technology Executive Committee (TEC) to enhance actions on technology development and transfer.
- The Paris Committee on Capacity-building to support implementation capacity in developing countries.
- Funding Institutions such as Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility which also administers the Special Climate Change Fund, Least developed Countries fund.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

1. **Paris Agreement Implementation and Compliance Committee rules of procedure were adopted in November 2022 by the COP.**
2. The Committee meets twice a year in line with the provisions in the Paris Agreement;
3. The members are technical and begin their term on 1 January and ends on 31 December;
4. One co-chair from a developed Country and one co-chair from a developing Country shall be selected and they serve for 3 years;
5. Decisions are made by consensus of two thirds majority;
6. The co-chair retains the rights to vote and each member has one vote;
7. The working language is English;
8. Meetings are open to Parties and non-parties as observers;
9. Should Parties not be compliant, the Committee will communicate in writing requesting information and should there be need, Parties may be requested to attend Committee meetings in which case they can ask for funding assistance;
10. The Committee can support countries not compliant with technical support as needed; and,
11. COP 27 closed with an agreement to provide loss and damage funding for vulnerable Countries hit by floods, droughts and other climate disasters and for mobilising more finances for developing Countries.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Funding: I**ndustrialised Countries agreed to support climate change activities in developing Countries by providing financial support for action on climate change. A system of grants and loans has been set up through the Convention and is managed by the Global Environment Facility. Several other Parties have also committed to support developing Nations including development banks, e.g. World Bank Group (IFC), AfDB, etc. Funding is also available for least developed Countries to prepare relevant reports as part of this Convention as well as fast-start finance (US$30 billion) mobilised through International institutions. The Green Climate Fund supports projects, programmes, Policies and other activities in developing Country Parties using thematic funding windows;

2. **Technology development and transfer:** Industrialised Countries agreed to share technology with less-advanced Nations. The Technology Mechanism is expected to facilitate enhanced action on technology development and transfer to support action on mitigation and adaptation.
3. **Support from international community:** to limit greenhouse emissions and adapt to effects of climate change in line with the economic development goals of the Countries. Under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, adaptation efforts are to be enhanced even through International cooperation to reduce vulnerability and build resilience in developing Country Parties, also considering their urgent needs.
4. **Capacity-building support**
5. Technical assistance for forest management.

**UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP meetings**

**Purpose:** To guide the implementation of the Convention in order to respond to global challenges and National needs.

**Objectives:**

1. To review reports submitted by the Parties and make recommendations based on the reports.

2. To make amendments to the Convention or to adopt new annexes.

**Governance/ Statutory Instruments/Rules of Procedure:**

1. **Meetings are every 2 years (the next will be in 2024).**
2. Any Party may propose amendments to the Convention and the amendments shall be adopted at an ordinary session by consensus of a two-thirds majority vote.
3. Text for the proposed amendment shall be communicated to the Parties by the Permanent Secretariat at least six months before the meeting at which it is proposed for adoption.
4. Parties have one vote and Regional economic integration organizations, in matters within their competence, shall exercise their right to vote with a number of votes equal to the number of their Member States that are Parties to the Convention. Such an organization shall not exercise its right to vote if any of its Member States exercises its right, and vice versa.
5. Other governing bodies are:
    i. The committee on Science and Technology (CST), a subsidiary body of the COP to provide it with information and advice on scientific and technological matters.
    ii. The committee for the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC), a subsidiary body to the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.
    iii. Intergovernmental Working Groups that assess specific issues such as drought by setting up effective policy and implementation measures.

**Legal and Policy issues:**

ANNEX 1: Regional implementation annex for Africa, aims to: (a) identify measures and arrangements, including the nature and processes of assistance provided by developed country Parties, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention; (b) provide for the efficient and practical implementation of the Convention to address conditions specific to Africa; and (c) promote processes and activities relating to combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought within the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas of Africa. The Annex covers strategic planning frameworks at National and Regional level including financial mechanisms to ensure strategic programs are implemented on a long-term basis.

**Opportunities/Incentives:**

1. **Funding:** Developed Countries committed to support developing Countries in Africa to implement their strategies on combating desertification and to support resource mobilising efforts with private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations.
2. **Access to technologies:** Developed Countries committed to promote and facilitate access by affected Country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.
3. **Joint programmes** in the fields of research, training, systematic observation and information collection and exchanges, to the extent that such activities may contribute to achieving the objectives of the Agreement concerned.

4. **International cooperation:** covering fields of technology transfer, scientific research and development, information collection and dissemination and financial resources.
5. **Designing and elaboration of programs** including financial support.
6. **Training and capacity building:** Parties agreed to develop and strengthen National, subregional and Regional research capabilities in affected developing Country Parties, including the development of local skills and the strengthening of appropriate capacities, giving attention to multidisciplinary and participative socio-economic research.
7. **Cloud seeding** and enhance availability of water in affected areas.

## 4.2 Analysis of relevant fora or regimes

Of the fora analysed, all had a common theme to support fair and equitable use of natural resources while safeguarding the environment for the benefit of society at large. While each platform has specific issues addressed, the majority of the fora or regimes can be classified into three main categories:

1. Biodiversity conservation focused fora such as COFI, ICCAT, CBD, CITES, Ramsar, Convention on conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, COPs, Commission or Meeting of Parties;
2. Climate change focused Conventions and fora such as the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC, Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer, Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, COPs.
3. Pollution, and governance of the marine environment focused Conventions and fora include the United Nations Law of the Seas, MARPOL, etc.

Support organisations for these fora include United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and International Marine Organisation (IMO).

Of note, is the lack or minimal financial contributions made by AU-MS. to the fora and regimes as stipulated in relevant Agreements. As an example, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa are the only States noted as contributing to the GEF while almost all Countries in Central, North and West Africa are in arrears for platforms such as ICCAT and other regimes. Some fora such as State Part meetings on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, ICCAT, etc. stipulate that Parties may be denied the right to vote if they are in arrears. While concessions may be made to support developing Countries participation, the lack of contributions pose a risk in negotiating an Africa position in such meetings.

Fora and regimes analysed indicate clear mechanisms for communicating with Secretariats or between Member Countries during and after meetings. Information is disseminated to all Party Members by the Secretariat who provide administrative and other support to members. The fora or regimes are also very clear on how disputes between Parties are settled and how amendments to the Conventions, Protocols, Annexes etc. can be made. Each Party has one voting right and provision is made for members to delegate their voting rights to Regional Economic Communities or Economic Unions if these ratify the Convention in some fora. This is not the case for

the IOPC Fund that deals directly with Member States for claim/compensation purposes.

Several opportunities and incentives are stated in the text and other documentation for the associated fora or regimes. These include, access to funding, either through the relevant Secretariat or International collaborations. Funding can be structured in various forms from grants to loans for the implementation of projects or programmes while other funding is provided to support the participation of developing States (e.g., ICCAT, IMO have resolved to fund at least one participant from developing Countries to attend relevant meetings). In additions, there are opportunities for research, training and capacity building (at times provided by the Secretariat and entities such as IMO, FAO, IOPC Fund Secretariat, CBD and CITES secretariat etc.) and support to draft legal frameworks localised for the Country in question (e.g. with CITES). Opportunities for International collaboration in skills development, technology transfer, equipment, information sharing and knowledge transfer as well as for developing joint programmes (research or otherwise) are also clearly articulated in the relevant documentations for the listed fora and regimes including the programme of works that is budgeted for and approved during COP meetings (see Table 1).

While each fora or regime covers specific issues with minimal to no overlaps, some have integrated efforts in order to harness synergies across the relevant platforms such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol meetings. For the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, a triple COP meeting is held covering relevant issues under each Convention and associated meetings.

There are a number of fora and regimes (over 30) on environment, biodiversity and climate change which can at times be an administrative burden for the Countries that are Party in these Conventions as focal points are required for each fora and regimes. This report only covers key fora of Global and International importance. Respondents in the survey developed highlighted the need for joint efforts to minimise the administrative burden including reporting requirements and cost as in most cases these responsibilities are shared with other National duties that the focal points have to fulfil.

# 5. AU-MS in North, West and Central Africa

North, West and Central Africa have some of the least participating Countries in Convention fora and other International and Regional fora or regime. This is partly due to externalities such as conflicts that cause instability in the Regions and require Countries and Economic communities to prioritize peace and safety. This is true for some Countries in Central Africa. Nonetheless, most of the Countries are Party to major International Conventions such as CBD and participate in environment and climate change fora or regimes.

A survey was conducted in the 31 Countries in North, West and Central Africa to obtain insights on the key challenges faced by AU-MS in participating in relevant fora, the perceived benefits of being part of the different fora and regimes and support needed including skills and capacity development. Responses were obtained from 25 AU-MS in the three regions (Figure 1). No responses were obtained from 6 Countries, 4 were from North Africa (Mauritania, Libya, Western Sahara, Algeria (a response from Algeria was obtained as part of the engagement with Ramsar Convention)). The two other Countries that did not respond are from Central Africa, Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon (a response from Gabon was obtained as part of the engagement with Ramsar Convention).

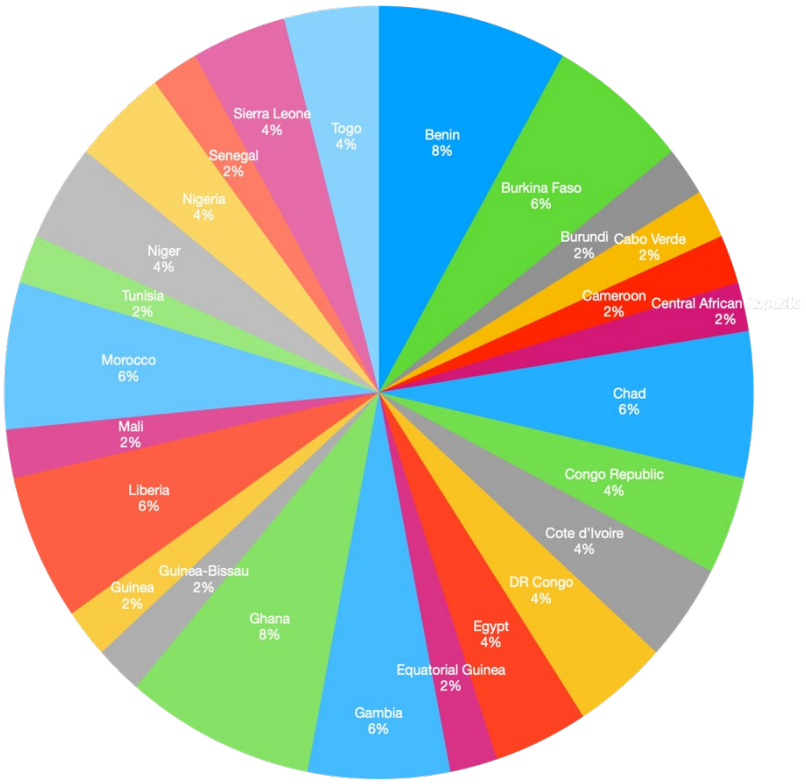



*Figure 1: Distribtion of respondents from North, West and Central Africa*

This session summarises the responses provided from the survey conducted.

## 5.1 Profile of the respondents to the survey

Forty-nine respondents gave insights to the challenges they face, and the skills needs within their Countries. These respondents comprise ministry representatives and focal points for Conventions, directors to Government Departments and Agencies, Directors of research institutes, and researchers.

Approximately 78% of the respondents were male and only 22% female (see Figure 2). Similarly, from the 23 one-on-one meetings held, less than 30% were with female respondents.

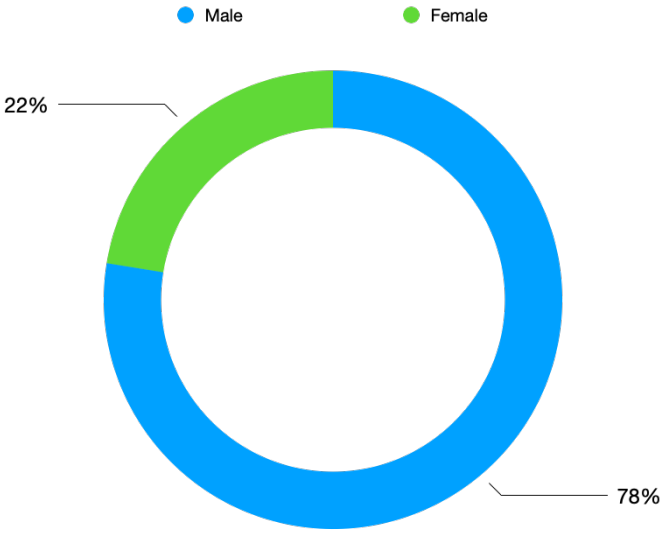



*Figure 2: Gender ratio of participants engaged*

## 5.2 Level of awareness of relevant fora or regimes

The level of awareness of the relevant Conventions and their fora varies across Countries. Responses from the forty-nine respondents indicate that there is a high awareness of some platforms such as the Convention on Biodiversity, United Nations Framework on Climate Change, Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter and the United Nationals Convention on the Law of the Seas fora and regimes. Between 63 – 88% (31-43) of the respondents were aware of these fora/ regimes, see Figure 3.




*Figure 3: Level of awareness of conventions fora and regimes by respondents in North, West and Central Africa*

Respondents were also asked about their level of participation in the relevant fora or regimes associated with the Conventions. Nearly 70% of the participants are involved in the Convention of Biodiversity, 39% in the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, 33% in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas and 33% in the Abidjan Convention COP meetings. Most platforms have a below 30% participation from the stakeholder engaged, see Figure 4.

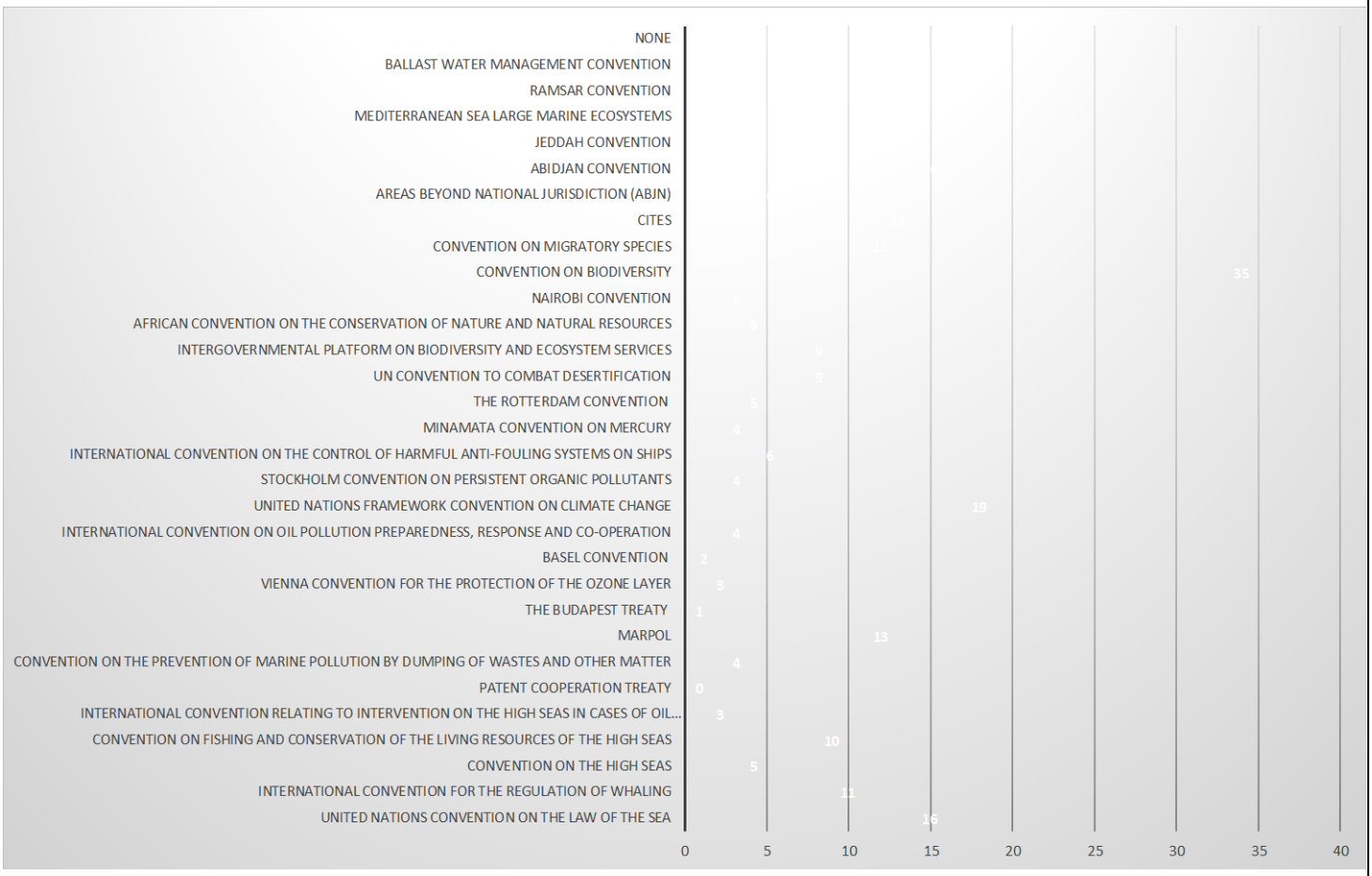



*Figure 4: Participation levels of respondents from North, West, and Central Africa in selected conventions and fora*

Four of the respondents indicated that they are not involved in any of the Convention fora or regimes while 1 respondent indicated that they are involved in the Ballast water management meetings under IMO.

## 5.3 Perceived benefits of participating in relevant fora and regimes

The forty-nine respondents stated the following benefits obtained from engaging in relevant fora:

- financial and technical support;
- training and capacity building;
- networking opportunities; and,
- harmonisation and localisation of laws and other legislation.

Six percent of the respondents indicated that they have not received any benefits from participating in these fora or regimes, financial or otherwise. Figure 5 summarises some of the categorised benefits stated by the respondents:

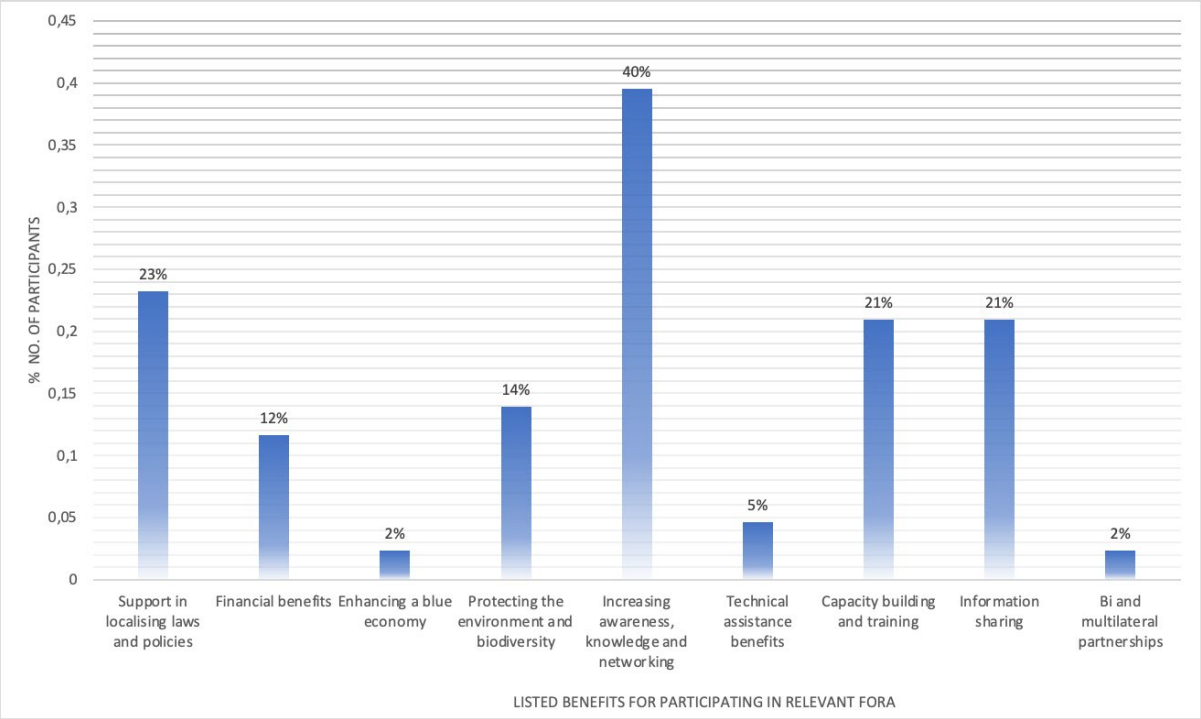



*Figure 5: List of benefits highlighted by respondents from different fora and regimes*

Most respondents indicated that the main benefit of engaging in the relevant fora and regimes was to increase awareness and knowledge on conservation issues and networking, 40% of the respondents). Others indicated that they receive support in localising their Laws and Policies (20% of the respondents) and others stated their benefits as capacity building, training and information sharing (21% of the respondents). Creating bi and multilateral partnerships and support to enhance a blue economy had the least number of respondents (2% of the respondents).

Specific benefits highlighted on training and capacity building include technical training in DNA barcoding based species identification, fisheries training and negotiation skills. Others respondents indicated that they had received support in mainstreaming and localisation International Conventions, understanding issues on wildlife crimes, understanding effects of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing on marine resources. Respondents in one-on-one discussions highlighted having received support from the German Government to support plastic pollution initiatives while others stated that the Japanese government was funding capacity building and other projects related to fisheries and the marine environment in line with some initiatives from the fora/ regimes they participate in. One respondent stated that they had received support to implementing a climate change adaptation and mitigation programme.

While the perceived benefits vary among the respondents, there was clear evidence of the knowledge of benefits that could be obtained from effective participation. However, the level of participation in the relevant fora or regimes is low which

minimises the benefits that some of the Countries obtain to support their local implementation efforts.

## 5.4 Challenges faced in participating in relevant fora and regimes

Over twenty challenges were stated by respondents for their lack of participation in relevant fora or regimes. This ranged from lack of funding, inadequate resources to implement the Convention requirements such as enforcement of legislation at a local level, lack of involvement of experts in key decision-making meetings for the relevant fora at local and International levels, lack of internet connectivity to participate in virtual meetings and trainings, high administrative burden from the fora requirements in terms of reporting and compliance, inability to negotiate and language barriers. Most issues mentioned where operational and not strategic decision made by Countries. Some respondents highlighted the need for advocacy on biodiversity conservation at a Continental level targeting decision makers such as Ministers to create awareness of the need to participate in these platforms. During the one-on-one meetings, some respondents stated that they did not see the need to get involved in some of the fora or regimes as they do not benefit their Countries.

Figure 6 indicates the challenges faced by AU-MS in participating in the relevant regimes and fora.

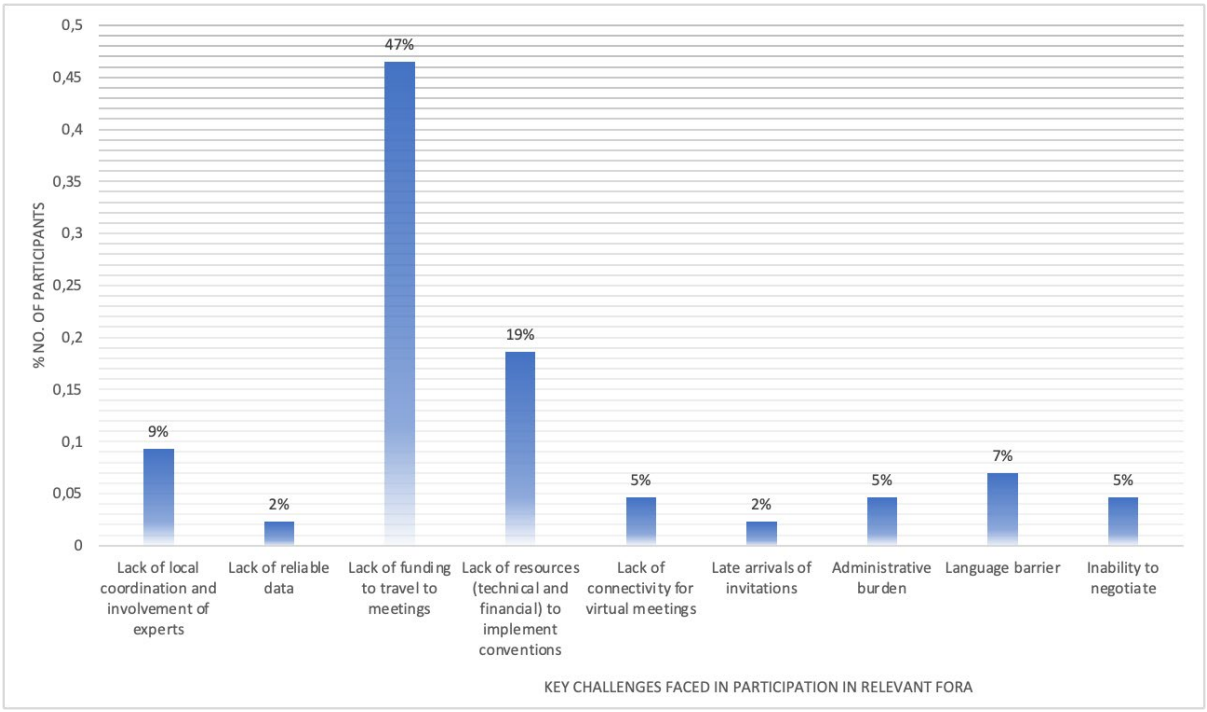



*Figure 6: Challenges highlighted for the lack of participation in relevant fora and regimes*

Approximately 47% of the participants mentioned the lack of funding as a major issue that hinders their participation in relevant meetings for International and Regional fora or regimes. Some meetings are sponsored while others have to be financed by

Government and at times some expenses are covered while others such as visa application costs are not. Respondents stated that this results in non-attendance in relevant meetings or fewer people attend from a Country, leaving behind key experts to support negotiations during the meetings.

Other respondents stated a lack of resources, both technical and financial as a major hindrance in their participation in relevant fora as they cannot implement the requirements of these Conventions, gather data and information needed for reporting or to enforce the relevant Laws and legislation put in place. In this regard, some respondents also highlighted their inability to resource mobilise for implementation of programmes and projects that would support the requirements of the relevant fora and regimes.

Respondents also indicated that the right experts are not involved in the fora or regimes which makes it challenging for Countries to negotiate and to make decisions in line with the International fora. Some respondents also highlighted the lack of data for decision support to effectively participate in meetings or for use in funding applications. Others indicated that though their Governments contribute to funds to entities such as the IOPC Fund, at times they fail to access the fund due to lack of data and research needed to support their applications.

Language was stated as a barrier for some respondents from North and Central Africa. Respondents mentioned the lack of translation from English to Arabic or French in some technical meetings. As such, their level of participation is limited in such meetings.

A lack of rationalisation of some of the fora and regimes results in disjoint efforts in deploying relevant interventions when implementing the fora requirements was also highlighted as an issue. In addition, administrative requirements of the fora and regimes were stated as a challenge by some of the respondents who mentioned that they need to balance their National duties with the requirements of the fora or regimes.

## 5.5 Support needed to enhance participation

While the majority of the respondents (47%) indicated that they need funding and resource mobilisation support, others (42%) stated the need for training and capacity building support to effectively participate in relevant fora or regimes. Other support requirements include technical support to meet reporting requirements (28%), technical and funding research support, Policy implementation support, support to acquire equipment and technologies for data collection, etc. Respondents also mentioned the need to develop relevant strategies such as Country level blue economy strategies that are anchored on the Continental strategy in order to ensure better synergies when implementing. A summary of the needs stated by the respondents is provided in Figure 7.

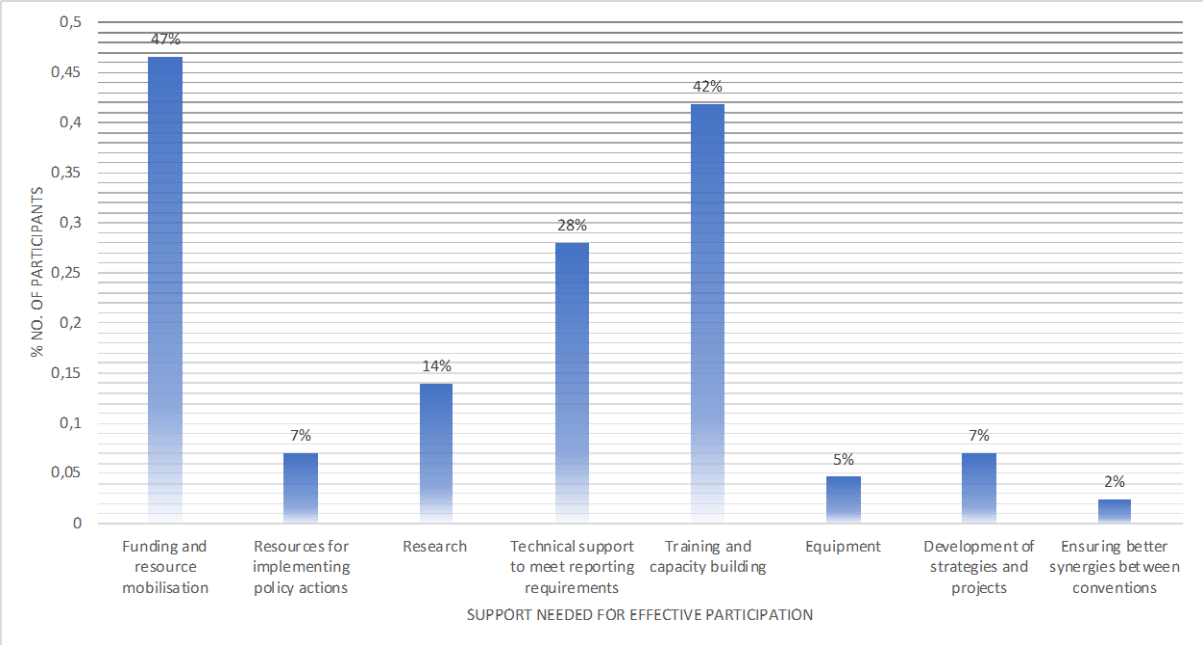



*Figure 7: Stated support requirements for AU-MS to participate in relevant fora and regimes*

A respondent from Lake Chad Management Authority indicated the need to accredit or officially recognise authorities/commissions in order for them to formally participate in relevant fora and regimes. They can participate as observers or if permission is granted. Moreover, commissions and authorities can represent their Member Countries when required to do so in some fora or regimes.

A statement was also made to strengthen the capacity of delegates attending the fora or regimes and ensure better synergies relating to the conservation of biodiversity, particularly in the aquatic environment. Moreover, a platform or network should be established to enable AU-MS to exchange information on pertinent issues that should be addressed at the relevant fora or regimes.

Engagements with teams from Countries such as Burkina Faso indicated that they have relevant legislation in place including a recently developed blue economy strategy but funding for enforcement of the relevant Laws and to implement the blue economy strategy is limited. Respondents call for more effort to support such Countries, including relevant transboundary organisations such as Lake Tanganyika Authority, Lake Chad Management Authority, Niger Basin Commission, etc. in developing Regional multi-year programmes. A respondent from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) also stated the need for well-resourced multi-year programmes in the Central African Region as such projects will support harmonisation of Laws and management frameworks of Countries in the Region while strengthening the ECCAS Secretariat.

Some of the research needs stated by the respondents include, data collection, species identification, decarbonisation of the shipping industry, effects of plastic and

chemical pollution on the marine environment, etc. Respondents stated that Africa needs to collect its own data and have a baseline for the marine environment to enable evidence-based decision making and better negotiation in the relevant meetings.

## 5.6 Skills and capacity building requirements

Respondents indicated the need for training and capacity building including training in fisheries, species identification, general skills to support biodiversity conservation, training in carbon credits and how they work, negotiation skills, training in developing incentives structured for the marine environment at a local level (e.g. tax rebates).

A specific question on whether or not the respondents had adequate negotiation skills indicates that the majority do not or are uncertain (36,7% and 30,6%, respectively), see Figure 8.

Other skills requirements as stated by the respondents are as listed in Figure 9.

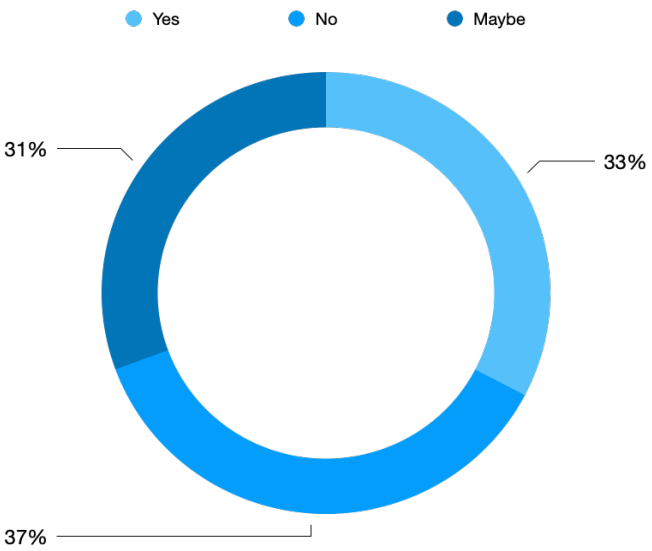



*Figure 8: Ability to negotiate in different fora*

*Figure 9: A list of training needs stated by participants from AU-MS in North, West and Central Africa*

**Technical**

- Research skills and use of advanced modern equipment
- Biodiversity conservation
- Marine biology
- Climate change
- Endangered species biology
- Marine coastal planning
- Identify toxic algae using molecular techniques
- Determining toxins in marine environment
- Hydrology
- Fisheries management
- Ecosystem management
- Aquatic stock assessments
- GMO detection
- DNA sequencing
- Data collection
- Fish stock assessment
- FAO PDMA and GIRS
- Food safety
- Circular economy

**Admin/Management**

- Negotiations and high-level engagements
- Relevant legislations
- Resource mobilization
- Oceans governance
- Proposal writing of bankable projects
- Leadership and change management
- Designing of agreements
- Risk management
- Content of Conventions

Respondents also highlighted that they have relevant local legislation in line with the stated fora requirements, however, for some Countries, not all Conventions were

ratified and therefore only some legislations are in place (see AU-IBAR report on the assessment of the Status of Ratification, Adoption and Implementation of key Continental and International Instruments related to aquatic biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and environmental management in West, Central and North Africa, 2023). 71% of the respondents stated that they have legislations while 16% were unsure and 6% stated that they did not have any legislation.

### 5.7 Respondents' suggestions for effective participation in relevant fora

Participants highlighted the need for strategic interventions to enhance participation in relevant fora and regimes including:

- Supporting National coordination efforts such as:
  - Establishing National monitoring units that are adequately resourced to enable implementation of initiatives. Similar structures like those of the Montreal Protocol on protection of the ozone layer can be used.
  - Establishing National consultative groups that include civil society, youth and women, private sector to ensure that all tiers of society are engaged on fora and regime issues.
  - Developing skills and capacity of National representatives.
  - Establishing and or strengthening National platforms to ensure better coordination and for institutional memory.
- Support regional integration efforts such as:
  - Conducting regular high-level meetings to create awareness of the relevant fora or regimes at various levels including Ministerial level.
  - Coordination of participants for pre-forum meeting preparations.
  - Creating a network of experts for decision support during fora meetings.
  - Driving advocacy on the importance of relevant fora to Policy makers.
  - Increased communication on the benefits derived by effectively participating in relevant fora or regimes.
  - Conducting Regional research initiatives to drive an Africa-wide blue economy and to safeguard the environment.
  - Enhancing the adoption of climate change policies at a Regional level.
  - Developing Regional strategies with anchor projects/programmes to support local implementation.

In addition, enhancing awareness campaigns on the importance of conservation, environmental management and climate change at a Continental level to decision makers and civil society was highlighted as a need by the respondents. This could ensure the development of relevant systems at a National level by decision makers

thereby enable Country focal points/representatives to obtain the support they need from Government in a timely manner.

# 6. A view from fora and regime Secretariats

Twenty secretariats to relevant fora and Conventions were contacted. Of these, only five responded and a summary of inputs from three of the Secretariats is provided in the sections below.

## 6.1 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Secretariat

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance is a Treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of Ramsar sites. Its mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and National actions and International cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world". Wetlands play a critical role in maintaining many natural cycles and supporting a wide range of biological diversity. They purify and replenish water and provide food such as fish and rice that feed billions of people. They are a natural sponge against flooding and drought, protect coastlines and help fight climate change. According to the Convention text, Party Members can benefit from International collaboration, financial support and technology exchange, training, and capacity building.

Nine respondents who are part of the Ramsar Convention secretariat were engaged. These include a senior advisor at the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands based in Cameroon, a Director General of Aquatic Ecosystems in Gabon, Director for the protection of Flora and Fauna in Algeria, focal points for the Convention in Rwanda and Chad and other members from Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, DRC, and Uganda. Of the 9 participants, 78% where male and 22% female.

According to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Secretariat, of the 51 African Parties that are Party to the Convention, 90% particularly in Sub-Sahara and Libya have communication issues (internet connection is poor) making it difficult to participate in online meetings and decision making; lack funding to travel to meetings, have inadequate skills to collate data and report on activities, have limited skills in negotiating resolutions during Continental and Global meetings, and have high turnover of National focal points which makes continuity difficult.

Other challenges stated by respondents who are part of the convention, and its relevant fora or regimes are:

- Lack of/ low levels of information sharing which causes misunderstandings;
- Issues of ownership of initiatives by some partner states;
- Language barrier for some nations; and,
- High turnover of staff.

The Secretariat offers various training opportunities in partnership with other organisations to support Countries improve the management effectiveness of wetlands. Training provided includes, wetland inventories, designating Ramsar Sites, assessment of threats to biodiversity, restoration of degraded ecosystems, wetland management, pollution control, etc. Short term training organized by the Ramsar Centre for Eastern Africa, exchange visits, development of tools for wetlands management and capacity development and development of models for wise use of wetlands were some of the listed training opportunities from the Secretariat.

To improve participation in relevant fora or regimes of the Ramsar Convention, respondents suggested the following:

- Building critical skills for wetland management.
- Building a community of proactive and wetland champions across the Continent to advocate for wetland management and Policy reforms.
- Improving access to financial resources to enable work at the local and sub-Regional level.
- Integration of initiatives such as Commission Internationale du bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha (CICOS), Central Africa Forestry Commission (COMIFAC) within a common Regional strategy.
- Creating a platform for knowledge exchange at a Continental or Regional level.
- Supporting projects and program development.
- Increasing visibility of conventions in some Countries that have not ratified.
- Harmonising the hosting of Convention fora or regimes and improving synergies among them.
- Increasing visibility of AU-IBAR in Gabon.

The Secretariat representative also indicated that between 2023 to 2025, several meetings will be held in preparation for the Conference of Parties (COP) in 2025. COP15 may take place in Zimbabwe in 2025, however, this has not been finalized. Three standing committee meetings will take place in 2023, 2024 and 2025 and funding would be needed to boost participation and contribution to Policy processes for the Convention. A preparatory meeting will also be held in 2025 before COP15.

## 6.2 ICCAT

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) is a tuna Regional fishery management organization, responsible for the management and conservation of tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent Seas. ICCAT's aim is to support co-operation in maintaining the populations of tuna and tuna-like species at levels which will permit the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes.

One of ICCAT's programmes, the Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP) has an overall objective to contribute to food security and economic growth

of the Atlantic Coastal States by ensuring sustainable management of tropical tuna resources in the Atlantic Ocean. Specifically, it will provide evidence-based scientific advice to developing Atlantic Coastal States, and other ICCAT Contracting Parties, for them to adopt appropriate conservation and management measures within the framework of ICCAT. These objectives will be realized by improving the estimation derived from tag-recapture data of key parameters for stock assessment, i.e., growth, natural mortality, migrations, and stock-structure.

Most of the Countries in Africa along the Atlantic Ocean are Party to ICCAT except for Togo, Cameroon, DRC, and Benin. Benin was once a member and left but has recently shown interest to rejoin ICCAT.

According to the ICCAT Secretariat, there are nearly one hundred and fifty requirements that Parties should comply with within specified deadlines, some of which, if missed have consequences. Some are complex while others are not, and others are mandatory. The Secretariat assists Member States to comply with the relevant requirement by supporting representatives to complete forms etc. when asked and needed. However, for most of the Countries in Africa, such requests are not made to the Secretariat, and they simply do not respond, resulting in non-compliance.

Some of the challenges faced by the ICCAT Secretariat when engaging AU-MS are:

1. Unresponsiveness to requests including calls for funding when available;
2. High turnover of staff with no proper handover of ICCAT issues to the new staff. As such, for many Countries, there is no continuity and with each new representative, the delegation must start from the beginning;
3. Weak support from decision makers to facilitate representative to attend meetings which results in delays in approvals and processing of relevant documentation for meeting attendance;
4. Delays in obtaining visas to attend meetings;
5. Weak scientific participation from AU-MS;
6. Weak capacity of member state representatives;
7. Lack of multidisciplinary teams to support the requirements and compliance issues of ICCAT; and,
8. Language is at times a barrier in scientific meetings that are held in English.

Over the years, ICCAT Secretariat has worked to support Member States by establishing a meeting participation fund to enable at least one representative from developing Countries, including Africa, to travel and participate in meetings. Unfortunately, not all AU-MS adhere to submission deadlines for application calls and miss out on this support despite personal calls and email reminders sent to them. Webinars are held for awareness and capacity building to support Member States and a calendar for yearly meetings and workshop is provided at the beginning of the year that Parties can adhere to.

The Secretariat has also held high level meetings at Country level to raise concern on the lack of continuity and high turnover of representatives of Member States and has requested that representatives bring out issues of visa application complications during commission meetings. However, for most AU-MS, these issues remain unresolved.

Through a voluntary fund, funding from Japan, USA and EU is available for capacity building in the form of short-term courses and workshops. While calls are made for applicants to submit their interest to attend, not all AU-MS are responsive.

The Secretariat also indicated that AU-MS like many Countries will need to master management strategy evaluation (MSE) as part of their involvement in ICCAT. MSE is a collaborative process that involves using computer simulations to compare relative ability to achieve a set of management objectives using alternative management strategies, defined as different combinations of data schemes, methods of analysis, harvest control rules and subsequent processes leading to management actions. This should therefore be one of the areas for which AU-MS should obtain support and expertise in the short term.

Recommendations for effective participation by the ICCAT Secretariat include:

1. Enhancing scientific capacity of representatives so they can engage better in technical discussions;
2. Improving coordination at national level so countries adhere to specific deadlines (especially mandatory ones). This could include supporting them with reminders of when certain deadlines for reporting, submission of applications etc. are;
3. Developing systems that enable institutional memory, so information is not lost with changes in personnel;
4. Resource mobilization to drive specific capacity needs, e.g., enhancing capacity on species identification that can be done in collaboration with ICCAT Secretariat or experts within ICCAT Party Members. Funding would have to be made available for training workshops by the AU-MS in need of support; and,
5. AU engaging with the European Union and other States on behalf of AU-MS to address and develop systems for speedy visa processing to attend meetings.

## 6.3 IOPC Fund

The International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPC) are two intergovernmental organisations (the 1992 Fund and Supplementary Fund) that provide compensation for oil pollution damage resulting from spills of persistent oil from tankers.

Twenty-eight AU-MS are Parties to the 1992 Fund Convention and two (Morocco and Republic of Congo) are also Parties to the Supplementary Fund Protocol. DRC is not Party to the Convention and Egypt and Togo are Party to the 1992 Civil Liability

Convention (CLC) while Libya is Party to the 1969 CLC. Most of the Countries along the North, West and Central Africa coastline are Party to the relevant Conventions, ensuring that there would be protected in the event of a major oil pollution incident.

IOPC requires that participation in meetings is done at Country level rather that at a regional economic or Continental level to enable Countries and relevant stakeholders in the Countries that are Party to the 1992 Fund Convention to claim compensation for pollution damage. Payment of claims can be done for Countries, local authorities, individuals, businesses who suffer pollution damage caused by oil transported by a tanker and can be claimed from the shipowner/insurer, the 1992 Fund and if applicable, the Supplementary Fund (if Party to this Protocol). Not all States need to be Party to the Supplementary Fund, as there is an additional cost involved based on the minimum threshold of received oil. For most Countries, the 1992 Civil Liability and Fund Conventions provide sufficient coverage.

Challenges faced by the IOPC Fund Secretariat when engaging with AU-MS are in relation to the implementation of the Convention locally and ensuring the Conventions are implemented into National legislation. Maintaining regular engagements with relevant Government representatives is also challenging which is needs to be addressed to ensure participation in meetings of the IOPC Funds' governing bodies and obligations such as submission of annual reports and payment contributions are met.

To support the relevant AU-MS, the IOPC Fund carries out various outreach activities. More recently, the Convention Secretariat has been working with the Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa (GI-WACAF) project to support governments and industries to enhance oil spill preparedness, response and cooperation. The project has trained over 5 200 people and held 13 Regional events. It is supported by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association - IPIECA (the Global oil and gas association for advancing environmental and social performance across the energy transition).

A nineth Regional conference of the Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa was held in Ghana in November 2022 where the IOPC Fund Director presented to increase awareness on the fund. Within the context of the GI-WACAF project, several technical assistance initiatives have been conducted including in Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome and Principe for the set-up of a National spill response system, in Togo for the procurement of oil spill response equipment and development of a training and exercise program and the launch of a study on the development of a sub-Regional Agreement for oil spill preparedness and response in Central Africa.

The meetings of the governing bodies take place every year and the next meeting is scheduled for May 2023.

# 7. Validation visits and meetings in Nigeria and Egypt

To validate the finding obtained from the surveys and online engagements, the consultant visited Nigeria and Egypt to discuss the Countries' involvement in relevant fora and regimes, the challenges faced in participating in these platforms, capacity requirements to enhance participation and strategies that could be put in place the support the Countries. Some of the findings were also verified during the discussions. This section outlines the inputs and insights from Nigeria and Egypt.

## 7.1 Summary of the inputs from Nigeria

The consultant met with the following stakeholders in Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Fisheries; Federal Ministry of Environment focusing on the Departments on Research and Statistics, Pollution Control, Land degradation and Drought Management, Desertification, Forestry and Climate Change (represented in absentia by other directors). Agencies of the Ministry of Environment, National Biosafety Management Agency, Great Green Wall, and National Parks Services. These were engaged in Abuja. The consultant engaged the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), the University of Lagos and the Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR) in Lagos.

In addition to the overall objective of the mission on validating current findings, other aspects assessed by the consultant included:

- Determining how data and information for decision support is collated and shared; and,
- Technologies and skills available in Nigeria that can be shared with other AU-MS for effective participation in relevant fora and regimes.

The consultant worked with Dr Awwal Bamanga to make the necessary arrangements for the mission and support was provided by various stakeholders engaged to ensure the success of the visit.

All participants engaged in Government were aware of the relevant fora listed in this report and some participated in the meetings as focal points for the Country. The level of awareness at the University was low while NIOMR stated that they supported some of the NIMASA work in response to the IMO requirements – particularly on Ballast Water Management.

Key findings on the challenges in participating in the relevant fora and regimes included:

- Funding, the departments need to budget for all meetings they attend at the beginning of the year and if the meeting is not budgeted for, they cannot attend. Budget allocation is not in their control and sometimes they do not receive the funding;
- Some meetings clash, e.g., in 2022 the CITES meeting which is held every two years was nearly at the same time as the ICCAT meeting which is held every year;

- Obtaining visas is a challenge and in 2022, the fisheries Department could not attend an ICCAT meeting as the nominee was denied a visa;
- During meetings, some Countries push alternative agendas that do not benefit the Continent. As an example, some Countries vote in support of lowering quotas without considering the nutrition demands of the Continent and with no scientific backing for the decision;
- Within ICCAT, some challenges are on the redistribution of quotas that have already been set and are currently in favour of EU and Japan. Renegotiation for Africa to increase its quota beyond the 1.3 metric tonnes is challenging even through relevant technologies are available to enable Nigeria to go beyond the current quota allocations;
- Other meetings related to Fisheries like ABNJ meetings are the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Environment and sometimes there are no inter-ministry engagements to enable the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to be involved in the International meetings;
- Currently, Nigeria is developing a blue economy strategy under a task force set up by the presidency;
- Some internal coordination issues need to be resolved to ensure that all relevant government departments are consulted in preparation for a meeting;
- Key meetings for the Department of fisheries include all FAO meetings, e.g. COFI, BRS triple COP, UNFCCC, ICCAT, IPBES. In most cases, the Department struggles to attend these meetings due to lack of funds;
- Other challenges in meetings such as CITES and CBD COP meetings is the lack of consensus of African Member States. While some consensus may be reached during preparatory sessions, other Countries change their positions during the meeting – case in point is the GEF funding decision made in Montreal in 2022. AUDA NEPAD supported a number of participants from Africa and have agreed to conduct a post Montreal workshop to take stock of the outcomes from the meeting;
- Current GEF funds, though accessible require a lot of bureaucracy to access the funding;
- Current logistics arrangements from AU in support of delegates to attend meetings is very weak and at times, people are unable to travel when they get to the airport due to lack of confirmed tickets;
- Dates for meetings and invitations are sometimes late which is a challenge when trying to obtain the relevant approvals; and,
- Focal points need to be assisted to approve all relevant applications including some from Non-Governmental Organisations that want to attend meetings.

Capacity requirements stated include:

- Capacity building requirements include negotiation skills, particularly on Access Agreements. Technical skills training is needed at state levels on species identification, stock assessments, etc. Different Nigerian States have the necessary manpower but not the skills to conduct stock assessments and officers also find it challenging to identify species, including those banned from trade;

- Additionally, it's important to understand some of the prominent issues being discussed Globally such as marine pollution and the technologies and solutions available;
- Negotiation skills are critical, and training should be done regularly including the youth as well to ensure succession plans are in place for the future;
- Species identification can also be an issue and capacity building initiatives are needed in this regard;
- Other capacity building requirements include; assessments of pollutants and remediation of areas including transboundary movement of chemical waste; testing of products that are coming into the region; ecosystem restoration and dry lands; a program can be implemented on restoration assessment methodology, especially in transboundary areas;
- Other training can be on electronic e-permitting, especially on illegal wildlife trade and on bond challenge barometer;
- Training for participants to identify documents for meetings and compliance is needed;
- More preparatory meetings are needed for the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety which is usually subdued in the CBD discussions;
- Training / awareness campaigns should be done on rules of procedure for meetings to prepare participants for such engagements;
- Training should also be done on technical concepts such as One Health and on synthetic biology so participants are able to engage on a technical level if needed;
- Data collection to address marine environment issues is critical and Countries should be supported to obtain baseline data as needed;
- Capacity building is needed for Countries to comply with IOPC requirements so they can claim compensation as when needed; and,
- Ports digitisation initiatives should be done to enable transboundary collaborations in securing ports on the Continent.

In addition, stakeholders made the following recommendation for consideration by AU-IBAR:

- When on-line meetings are held, officers find it challenging to obtain data (internet) for meetings that run for days and need support to purchase data as they end up using their personal funds;
- There is need to align licensing Agreements across different countries as this is currently a challenge with fishing vessels that fish in transboundary areas. AU-IBAR can potentially support with harmonisation of legislation in this area;
- Baseline data is also an issue to enable monitoring and better discussions in International meetings. The key issue is funding to conduct the work though manpower is available;
- It is also important that the invites sent should be copied to the current officer in charge as at times other Ministries send people who are not well conversant in the subject matter or understand the meeting requirements;
- It is important for AU-MS to reach consensus before a meeting like what is done by the EU. On certain decisions, the EU has one speaker representing all the Member States. On some contentious issues where consensus has not been reached by the EU, individual Countries represent themselves. In

this regard, the AU can likewise appoint a speaker to communicate Continental decisions on behalf of the AU-MS;

- Preplanning meetings should be held regularly and well in advance of the COP meetings to ensure that Member States flesh out any issues and reach a compromise where needed. For example, on CITES Countries with large number of certain species have a different reality to those who have a few, e.g., the issue of elephants in Southern Africa vs the rest of Africa. Countries in different Regions are different and have different realities. In such cases, AU-MS can discuss and agree on a compromise for a common Agreement in Regional meetings otherwise no consensus will be reached during COP meetings.
- Regional meetings should be arranged on time and a sizeable number of participants invited to the meetings – not just one person. This can be combined with some training initiatives to ensure that participants maximise these meetings. As an example, negotiation training can be done twice a year and AU-MS should also be taught how to lobby as part of this training;
- It is important to have a panel of experts for Regions that can be called upon to discuss and obtain advise on key Regional challenges – a Regional think tank. Such a panel can provide advice in preparation of meetings and can be consulted during relevant fora as and when needed;
- Pollution in the marine environment is an issue that transcends boundaries, and a Regional approach is needed when addressing such an issue. In preparation for relevant fora, a Regional holistic approach should be discussed and agreed upon;
- AU-IBAR can provide financial support to ensure that larger delegations can attend meetings. In some meetings, the African/Country delegations are small resulting in Countries not being able to attend all relevant sessions which disadvantages the Continent in negotiations. Most Governments cannot send more than one person and there is need for teams to be sent to meetings including the youth and women to ensure succession plans are in place and for continuity beyond the one person representing the Country. This will ensure that the quality of the representation in meetings/fora is good;
- Country exchange programmes can also be done as part of the Regional engagements so Countries may learn some good practices from each other;
- MOUs should also be signed within Regions to support species management which allows Countries to engage with a common understanding;
- AU should engage Member States to pay their dues/contributions, some of which lead to AU-MS being disallowed to participate/ vote in some meetings;
- Awareness raising of some of the species that are banned for trade should also be prioritised. This should be done near airports and other ports at Continental level as illegally trades species pass many States before reaching their final destination;
- AU could provide leverage in the visa application process by engaging relevant Parties to enable faster processing of applications;
- AU should support to gather and keep data for the Continent, especially on climate change issues as this will support negotiations in relevant meetings;

- Funding should also be considered for local youth and women organisations to attend some of the fora or regimes as they understand the realities of society more,
- AU-IBAR should work with delegated persons within Country to support National coordination efforts.

NIOMR has extensive capacity to support training initiatives on the marine environment at a Regional and Continental level and have been doing so under different programmes/initiatives. They have also developed technologies for post-harvest management in the fishing industry, environmentally friendly fishing gear and have capacity to conduct some analysis in ISO Accredited labs. The institute conducts some work to support Government Agencies to comply with relevant fora and regimes and for Policy support. On the other hand, University of Lagos has strong academic capabilities to train and upskill new researchers in aquatic biodiversity but requires support to enhance research capabilities to support the Country in adhering to the relevant fora and regimes.

ECOWAS was unavailable for a meeting during the visit to Nigeria.

## 7.2 Summary of inputs from Egypt

The consultant met the following stakeholders in Egypt, focal points for CBD, CMS, CITES, Ramsar from the Egyptian Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Nature Conservation, the Central Laboratory for Aquaculture Research (CLAR), World Fish and the National focal point Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE- UNFCCC), National Designated Entities – Climate Technology Centre & Network (NDE-CTCN). An online engagement was held with a representative from the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (NIOF) and General Authority for Fish Resources Development: Lake and Fish Resources Protection and Development Agency (LFRPDA).

Support was provided from several stakeholders in Egypt to ensure inputs were provided for the mission. During the visit, it was clear that the centralized system within the Country ensures coordination among different Government Departments and Agencies to provide input for various fora and regimes.

Key challenges stated that hinder effective participation include:

- A lack of understand in negotiation techniques, e.g., the type of language to use relevant to the other parties; lack of understand in the subject matter and no clear view of the wants and needs of other negotiating Parties;
- At times, sponsorship is obtained for two people to attend fora and regimes where more than 15 issues are discussed which results in the participants not being able to cover all the issues;
- Inadequate infrastructure within Countries to support the activities of the different fora and regimes. Countries are under resourced to follow through on the many platforms that deal with climate change, aquatic biodiversity, and environment;
- On CITES, there is compliance and political instability that is an issue for some Countries;
- Availability and accessibility of information is an issue for many Countries to effectively participate;

- A need to balance the requirements of some of the fora and developmental socio-economic challenges faced in Africa. Countries should be supported to better negotiate on benefit sharing which seems to be an issue for most developing Countries;
- Timing for some meetings is an issue, e.g., the CITES meeting overlapped with some meetings for the Barcelona Convention;
- Obtaining a visa is sometimes challenging for some Countries;
- Funding can also be an issue in attending some meetings;
- On climate change, through all Countries agree that it is a problem and mitigation, and adaptation are needed, there doesn't seem to be a clear vision for Africa on how to address and resource this issue at a Continental level,
- Governance issues also pose as a challenge for participation in some cases.

Capacity building considerations include:

- Capacity development of teams that cover legislation, technical, financial, and political issues. These four dimensions are critical in ensuring that AU-MS participate effectively in meetings.
- Institutional reforms are needed to enable institutions at National and Regional level to effectively engage in International fora and regimes.
- Sustainable agriculture techniques are needed.
- Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems training should be conducted to measure the amount of greenhouse gas emissions reduced by specific mitigation activities.
- Green bond and carbon credit training is also needed.
- Support marine cage aquaculture is also needed.

Recommendations for consideration include:

- Increase sponsorship for more people to be able to attend relevant fora and regimes from different Countries;
- Consider using existing platforms like the Africa group of negotiators on biodiversity issues to build on them and capacitate them and not to start new initiatives. In preparation for some meetings, about 8-10 Regional consultations are held at times within these platforms;
- Increase public awareness on the blue economy through education and other stakeholder engagements;
- A data repository is needed for Countries to be able to access relevant information and data for participating in the different Conventions;
- Consider supporting the involvement of women and youth and civil society (people affected) in some of these fora and regimes;
- Support is needed to harmonize legislation as some Countries have no legislation even on pollution and allow everything to happen in the marine environment while other Countries have regulations that they adhere to. In such case, enforcement of laws is challenging;
- AU-IBAR can work at a Regional level and support some of the existing institutions to support the Countries they represent such as the Regional Economic Communities. This should be done after considering if these institutions have capacity and ability to perform in line with their vision;

- Consider innovative ways to finance initiatives in Africa on aquatic biodiversity, environment, and climate change. A comparison could be done on how some Countries in Asia are implementing such financial mechanisms;
- It is important to improve synergies between fora and enable effective coordination at National and local level;
- Define the technology requirements for Africa and understand the legal framework to enable a coordinated approach in negotiating for access to technology in the relevant fora and regimes; and,
- Africa has the resources; the rest of the world needs access, and it is crucial that the Continent positions itself to negotiate in a manner that benefits its people.
- Awareness of events is needed and a newsletter, adverts on the AU-IBAR website etc. can be done to increase awareness across the continent of all relevant events.
- AU-IBAR can also coordinate for participants to attend relevant events through relevant Centers of Excellence.
- AU-IBAR can support coordination for obtaining accreditation.
- AU-IBAR can coordinate for negotiators to obtain inputs from various tiers of society during the negotiation process. This could be done by setting up a WhatsApp group with stakeholders from private sector, public sector, NGOs, civil society representatives, etc. so inputs can be obtained to support the negotiation process.
- Scholarships for young scientists with clear criteria on how they will be selected and enabled to attend fora and regimes should be set up.
- Enhance coordination through existing platforms such as COMESA or other established regional community bodies.
- AU-IBAR can enhance cooperation with Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

An Africa biodiversity fund was proposed in one of the meetings but was not adopted. Furthermore, if such a structure is to be considered, it is important to understand how it will be financed, and the operational arrangements to ensure success of such a fund.

Visits to CLAR and World Fish highlighted the capacity available in Egypt to support Continental initiatives in the field of aquaculture research and training and for protein security on the Continent. CLAR is an already recognized AU-Center of Excellence and is looking to obtain OIE reference lab accreditation which will go a long way in supporting the Continent in research on fish diseases. Moreover, capabilities available support a significant part of the fish value chain including seed and feed which are critical components in supporting the aquaculture industry on the Continent. A technology to enhance production while reducing energy consumption have been localized by World Fish and has potential to address water and energy requirements in many Countries that are already water stressed due to climate variabilities.

# 8. Mechanisms for effective participation by AU-MS in International fora and regimes

The Convention on Biodiversity's strategic plan is comprised of a shared vision, mission, five strategic goals and twenty targets (Aichi Targets). These provide a guide

to Countries, Regions, Continents in developing their own plans and targets that can be clearly measured and tracked periodically. Similarly, the Paris Agreement calls for Countries to submit plans for climate action known as Nationally determined contributions (NDCs). These frameworks create an enabling environment for Countries to set targets that can also be monitored and tracked periodically. Such frameworks are supported by relevant fora meetings and engagements to address key and pertinent Global issues. As such, it is of paramount importance that AU-MS are involved in these fora or regimes to address issues that pertain to their Countries.

Across the North, West and Central African Regions, there are varying levels of awareness of the different fora or regimes on aquatic biodiversity, climate change and environment. Most people in Government and some NGOs that participate are aware, but the level of awareness decreases in research environments, yet research institute can provide data for decision making in relevant fora. To enhance participation, the level of awareness of these platforms needs to increase significantly beyond participating Government Departments and Agencies. Moreover, skills and capabilities to negotiate, scientific research, etc. need to be enhanced for participants to effectively engage in the relevant fora. Coordination of efforts is also crucial to ensure that AU-MS speak with one voice during meetings and lastly, Countries should be supported to implement strategic initiatives that drive a sustainable blue economy.

From the insights obtained from the various engagements held, four strategic goals and eighteen mechanisms were drafted to enhance participation of AU-MS in North, West and Central Africa. These are:

**Strategic Goal 1:** Increase awareness of relevant fora and regimes on climate change, environment, and aquatic biodiversity in the context of the blue economy for AU-MS.

To implement this goal, it is important to develop an awareness raising plan with clear goals, message, and define a target audience for the engagements. Mechanisms to improve awareness would include:

1. **Creation of a platform for AU-MS to obtain information on different fora and regimes** summarizing the benefits of engagement, rules of procedure, legal issues for consideration and sources of funding available to attend meetings. This platform should have text in English, French and Arabic and can be linked to other Secretariat platforms to ensure there is no duplication and up to date information.
2. **Conducting regular awareness meetings/workshops**, e.g., annually/every 6 months on issues/agenda points in upcoming fora or regime meetings to ensure they negotiate and reach consensus on some critical issues before the meeting. This platform should also be used to refresh participants on some of the modalities of the fora while providing sufficient background information for new Country representatives who may not have prior knowledge of the fora

requirements and text. Member States can exchange knowledge and share lessons to enable cross-learning across the Continent.

3. **Coordinating a network of experts** in each Region to provide insights, data, and models on key pertinent issues on aquatic biodiversity, climate change and environment. This network should work within the existing structures as defined in the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa. Experts can form part of a working group that supports the work of regional think tanks and comprise Country experts with well recognized scientific credibility who can serve as a liaison panel when preparing for COP meetings to ensure there is robust data and information to back Africa's position on specific decisions and can support negotiations during meetings.
4. **Creating partnerships with relevant fora and regime secretariats** to enhance coordination of AU-MS in participating in different meetings /workshops. Where possible, Agreements can be signed defining the areas of collaboration targeting AU Member States, e.g., with the Ramsar Secretariat who have expressed interest in signing an MOU with AU and its Agencies such as AU-IBAR. Support to AU-MS can therefore be provided jointly between AU-IBAR/selected entity and the relevant fora and regimes Secretariat.
5. **Conducting high level meetings with relevant decision makers (Ministerial level)** to highlight the importance of the fora and regimes and benefits that are/can be received from active participation and progress being made on specific targets. Such meetings can be used to highlight the issues that Countries should be aware of for Policy and legislation formulation and enforcement. These meetings can be done through existing REC structures with a revolving agenda point on relevant regimes or fora for discussion and noting by the relevant Ministers/Government officials.

**Strategic Goal 2:** Improve capacity and skills of member states through training, technology, and advanced research.

1. **Enhancing negotiation skills** of AU-MS to effectively participate in relevant fora and regimes through training and capacity building workshops. Training sessions can be arranged for AU-MS annually or every two years on negotiation and lobbying skills to improve capacity of AU-MS. Some fora such as CITES have toolkits for negotiation skills that could be used to train participants.
2. **Improving technical capabilities** through short-term or long-term technical training. Specific short-term training program can be designed to address skills gaps by recognized Centers of Excellence as determined by the AU. Countries in need of training can be supported directly or through funding from developed States made available within the context of the relevant fora. Where necessary, linkages with developed Countries can be made to support long-term studies, e.g., Ph.D. or Post-Doctoral studies with a research focus on Africa and some level of endorsement from AU. Additionally, a hub and spokes models can be implemented to build capacity in Countries in need by linking them with

Countries with stronger capabilities, e.g., on aquaculture research, linkages could be made with CLAR in Egypt and marine research with NIOMR in Nigeria.

3. **Leveraging technology** through technology transfer and technology localisation from developed States. Most fora make provision for technology transfer from developed Countries to developing Countries to address the objectives and goals of the Conventions they administer. AU-IBAR or a selected entity within the AU can assess in creating multi-lateral Agreements that enable technology transfer to Countries in Africa for research and data collection purposes and based on a needs assessment for the Continent. Intellectual Property (IP), and data sharing frameworks should be in place to safeguard information from the different AU-MS. Should these Agreements be made at National level, AU-IBAR or a selected entity within the AU can provide legal and IP support for negotiating appropriate Agreements for their Countries.
4. **Enhancing research and data collection** by developing critical capabilities to drive research on the Continent. This should be done by acquiring relevant equipment and skilled human resources to support the collection of baseline data where it is needed and for continuous monitoring to ensure evidence-based decisions are made on critical issues and for negotiating in relevant regimes and fora.
5. **Augment existing knowledge repositories for information and data sharing** to enhance reporting in line with relevant fora or regimes and to strengthen institutional memory of these fora. Key to reporting, is data collection and information gathering which has been identified as a challenge by AU-MS. Were possible, National data repositories can be developed (where they do not exist) with the support of the REC who can aggregate the data for the Region to be shared at a Continental level with relevant AU Agencies. This allows analysis of aggregated data for decision support in relevant fora while at the same time ensuring that Countries have mechanisms to collect data, monitor and track progress in a systematic manner. Such a framework will also allow Countries that need assistance to obtain support from other Countries that have established working systems and can enhance Regional integration.

**Strategic Goal 3:** Enhancing coordination of AU-MS to effectively participate in relevant fora or regimes.

1. **Strengthening local coordination** by supporting relevant National institutions to develop systems and tools for coordination and reporting. For some of the fora or regimes, the reporting requirements can be complex with very strict deadlines with consequences for non-compliance. Some require inputs from multi-disciplinary teams with relevant scientific, mathematical, legal skills, etc. Countries may therefore be encouraged to form National response teams rather than centralise all engagements on one individual. Moreover, institutional memory is needed for long-term engagements and to enable continuity. As such, Countries should be supported to develop systems that enable

institutional memory for continuity in each forum. A team approach also ensures succession plans are in place for when other members leave the system.

2. **Strengthening Regional coordination** by supporting RECs, commissions, and authorities (CICOS, COREP, CSRP, CEAC, UMA) to coordinate regular Regional workshop/meeting relevant to the fora or regimes. In addition, support is needed to strengthen Regional fora such as the Abidjan Convention fora and others that are not as effective as they could be due to a lack of resources (funding and human resources). Some RECs and Regional bodies can also be supported to ratify some Conventions to enable them to represent their Member States in designated meetings.
3. **Strengthening Continental coordination** by conducting preparatory meetings where AU-MS can flesh-out a common position for negotiation on key issues in fora meetings. This should be done in collaboration with various regional bodies such as RECs, CSOs, regional fisheries commissions/bodies, etc. As recommended by some participants, AU can appoint a designated speaker that communicates all agreed upon positions of the Continent in relevant fora and regimes (like what is done by the EU). The designated speaker can be supported by experts in the Regional think tanks (from the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa structure) in negotiations as needed. To do this, AU will have to ratify some of the Conventions and be authorised to speak on behalf of the Member States.
4. **Supporting the harmonization of legislation on biodiversity, climate change and environmental issues** across transboundary areas to enable effective implementation of fora and regime requirements, monitoring, and surveillance in a collaborative manner. Support can be provided to commissions and authorities/regional fisheries bodies, RECs, CSOs, etc. that drive Multi-Regional initiatives to enable them to harmonise legislation and other legal frameworks across Regions.

**Strategic Goal 4:** Enhance implementation fora or regimes at a local level through strategic programs

1. **Establish partnerships with International Organisations** to develop Regional multi-year, multi-disciplinary programmes. Platforms such as the EU-Africa initiatives can be used to leverage involvement of other International organisations and institutions such as the UN and its Agencies / Organisations, relevant secretariat of various fora and regimes who have budget allocations to support AU-MS and other developing Countries, etc. These partnerships will support program implementation as defined by AU-MS. Currently, governments in developed Countries support different initiatives that are Country specific and are done on a short-term basis. Strategic programs can be defined for which the short-term projects can be aligned to ensure that these projects have a common outcome / vision in line with the strategic goals of the Continent.
2. **Establishing a resource mobilization team** and conducting proposal writing workshops to support various institutions, Governments, and organisations on

the Continent. Most respondents in North, West and Central Africa expressed the need for support to develop bankable proposals to help implement the requirements of relevant fora and regimes. This can be done by engaging experts who can train relevant Country representatives in resource mobilization and proposal writing. A team of experts can be established in a revolving roster that is coordinated by AU-IBAR or a selected entity. Proposal writing workshops can be held on a yearly basis to draft proposals for submission to relevant Parties.

3. **Establishing an Africa Blue Economy trust fund** within the task force already created by IGAD, WWF and AUDA NEPAD to support key strategic initiatives on the Continent. A fund that leverages domestic resources from Countries against International voluntary and other funds from multiple sources can be established to drive strategic initiatives that are of paramount importance to the continent, e.g., the issues of decarbonization, plastic pollution, etc. that have far reached consequences at a systems level. Other critical issues on MRV systems, green/ blue bonds, carbon credits need urgent attention at a Continental level. Engagements with relevant funders, foundations, UN Agencies, including the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), African Development Bank (AfDB) and other Regional development banks, philanthropic organizations working in Africa such as Bill and Melinda Gates etc. can be done to assess the potential of funding this Instrument. A donor conference can be held every three to five years to replenish funding as needed while operational issues can be assessed in a feasibility study for establishing such an Instrument.

4. **Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework** with indicators, baseline, and targets to monitor implementation progress and take corrective measures as needed. This is crucial to ensure accountability and ownership at a Continental level and will create pressure on Countries that are not progressing to actively participate in implementation for the benefit of their Country.

# 9. Recommendations

Priority actions can be drawn for implementation within the short term (1-2 years) while other actions can be implemented in the medium to long-term (3-5 years).

Activities that can be prioritized in the short term include:

1. Awareness raising activities such as:

   - Engaging civil society using a variety of mediums such as social media, newsletters and Blogs on specific subject matter. Several of the Fora and Regime Secretariats have videos that can be cross shared to broaden reach.

- Conducting training and knowledge exchange workshops that could cluster environmental, biodiversity and climate change issues and the supporting frameworks, Fora and Regimes that support International and Regional collaboration.
- Sharing of opinion pieces highlighting key issues being addressed by different Countries and featuring some of the success stories on the Continent that other Countries may learn from.
- Developing and implementing a communication and visibility plan.
- Conducting a stakeholder mapping exercise and analysis to ensure there is no duplication of efforts by various stakeholders.

Translations should be done to English, French and Arabic (possibly Portuguese/Spanish as well) when conducting the various awareness raising campaigns to cover all the Member States in North, West and Central Africa.

2. Capacity building activities such as:
   - Training in negotiation skills for relevant focal points and delegates. This can be done by conducting Regional workshops with relevant Country representatives on agreed upon timelines.
   - Technical training in species identification and MSE, MRV systems .
   - Developing a systems for data collection at a Continental level using National and Regional frameworks currently in place.
   - Conducting proposal writing workshops.
   - Develop training manuals.

   Technical training can cover more fields than what is currently stated and AU-IBAR can on an annual basis engaged relevant focal points in the different Countries to define priority technical training needs. In addition, AU-IBAR can engage with relevant Secretariat to support AU-MS with training material that is readily available while other training opportunities are considered for the medium to long-term.

3. Coordination activities such as:

   - Supporting RECs, commissions and other Regional bodies to effectively engage and coordinate AU-MS in their Regions on, Fora or Regime issues.
   - Conducting planning workshops with AU-MS representatives before meetings to agree on specific decisions and ensure one African Voice during relevant Fora or Regimes. Currently various AU Organs/Agencies are supporting different initiatives, e.g. CITES preparatory meeting and CBD meetings supported by AUC and AUDA NEPAD, respectively. A consolidated coordination effort at the AU level is needed to maximise resources available. Furthermore, other Regional bodies such as ATLAFCO have been supporting Countries along the Atlantic Ocean with funding to engage regionally before the relevant Global meeting and at times fund participants to take part in International Fora or Regimes.

- Sharing of Agreements with relevant authorities to draft legislation for their local context.
- Augment existing rosters of experts on the Continent to cover various sectors and ensure data and information for decision making is provided timeously for negotiation in relevant Fora.
- In line with the Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa, establish a working group that covers aquatic biodiversity and links to the established Africa think tank to advise and support negotiations on key issues in aquatic biodiversity, environment and climate change.
- AU ratifying some Conventions and actively participating in some Fora and Regimes on behalf of Member States. In this case, AU can consider appointing speakers on behalf of the AU-MS in relevant meetings who articulate and negotiate Africa's position on certain issues.

Medium to long-term priorities would include:

- Facilitation of technology localisations in key areas of interest on the Continent.
- Supporting long-term training such as PhD and Post-Doc studies.
- AU-IBAR to engaged with IGAD, AU-NEPAD, WWF etc. on the establishment of the Africa Blue Economy Trust Fund supported by relevant resource mobilisation efforts and mechanisms for operationalising the fund.
- Enhance existing knowledge repository and data sharing platforms.
- Institutional support and institutional reform at local and Regional levels to ensure inputs is provided by various tiers of society including private sector, civil society, Government, NGOs, etc.
- Implementation of anchor programs to drive Africa's Blue Economy in line with the relevant Fora or Regimes.
- Enhance female participation in relevant Fora, targeting at least 50% participation.
- Enhancing youth participation in the relevant platforms to ensure succession.

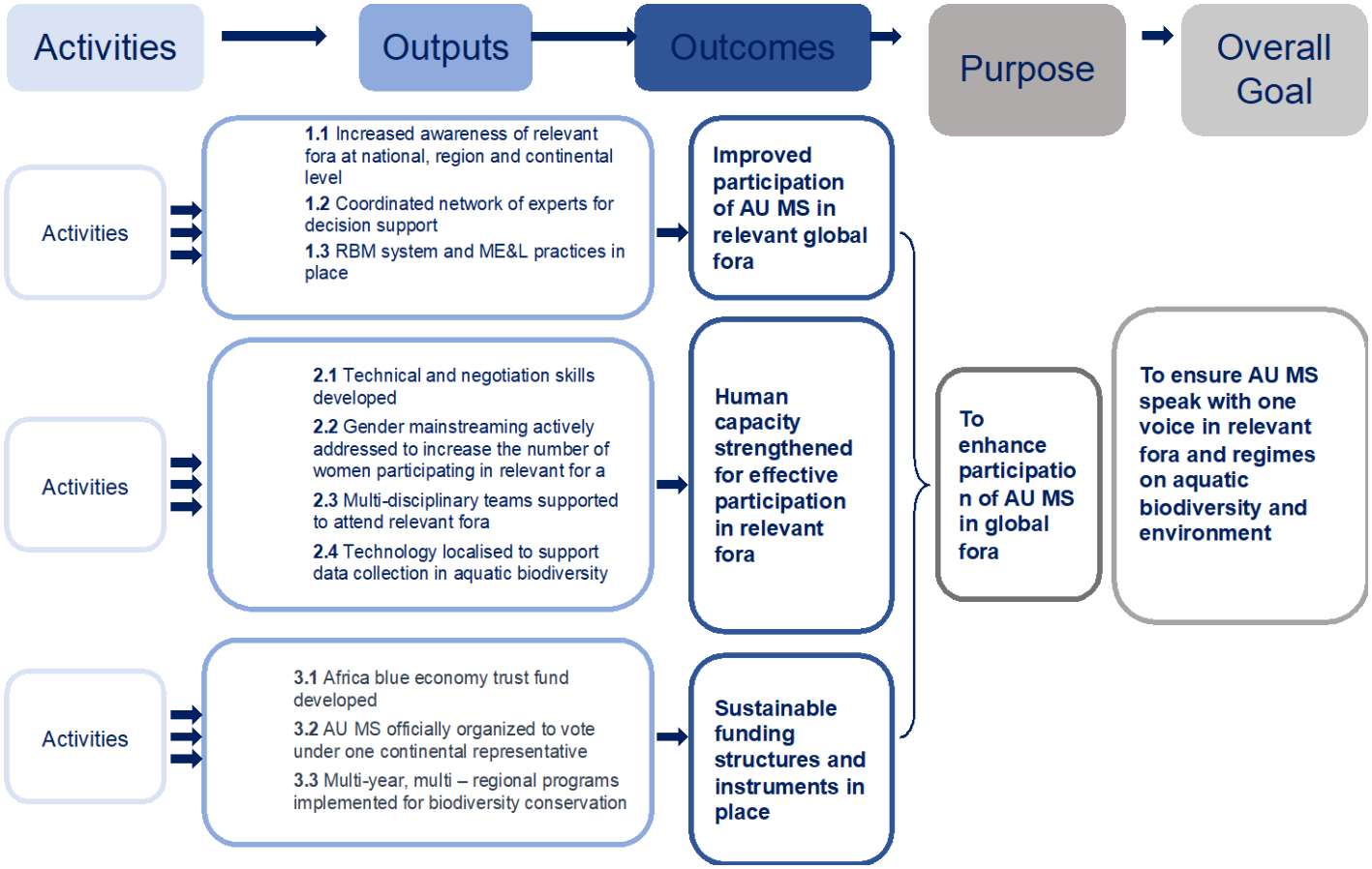
Consideration should also be made for Africa Union to support AU-MS in a similar manner as the European Union. The EU represents its members in several Fora and Regimes, and they have done this by ratifying the Conventions and obtaining authorization from their Member States to represent them. As such, EU presents one position for some issues during meetings and has established a centralized coordination team that engages their Member States to collate data and information for reporting purposes.

EU submits reports covering their members and caters for all administrative requirements that need to be complied with by the relevant Fora and Conventions. Funding to support research projects and other initiatives in line with the fora

requirements are centralized and disbursed as needed. Such a structure could reduce the administrative burden of having 31 AU-MS in North, West and Central Africa submitting individual reports and improve operational efficiencies for Countries.

Engagements with various stakeholders indicate that challenges faced by AU-MS in participating in relevant Fora are operational. As such, a centralized coordination system could address this problem.

## 10. Results Framework




A results framework is proposed which can be used by AU-IBAR MEL expert to draft indicators and targets to be implemented on a yearly basis. AU-IBAR will need to define relevant indicators for each outcome and outputs defined and define the baseline data and targets.

## Annex 1: Survey Questions

- Name of your Organisation / Institution
- Your Job Title
- Your Gender
- Which Country are you from/ are you based?
- Which Forums are you aware of that are relevant to aquatic biodiversity?
- Which do you participate in?
- What benefits have your received / can you receive from participating in selected Forums?
- What are the challenges you face in participating in these forums/regimes?
- What support do you need to enhance participation and to support aquatic biodiversity in your Country?
- What skills/ training support do you need?
- Do you have adequate negotiation skills to engage in listed forums/regimes
- Do you have policies at National level aligned to the relevant forums?
- What strategies can be employed for better participation on your Country in relevant forums?
- Any other suggestion?

# Annex 2: Stakeholder Consultative Workshop

2-5 May 2023, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania
Inputs provided

**Template for Collecting Feedback to Enrich Reports on Mechanisms for Enhancing the Effective Role and Participation of African Union Member States in Regional, Continental and Global Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Management Related Fora or Regimes.**

*Region: West, Central and North Africa*

**Morning Session**

| Report Section | Comments and Suggestions |
|---|---|
| 1. Important fora or regimes (conventions / instruments) identified in the report – *suggest additions or ones that should be removed with justification for removal or additions.* | - *The Abidjan and Nairobi Convention (to be included in the table);*<br>- - *The WTO agreement on fisheries subsidies;*<br>- - *The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments;*<br>- - The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation;<br>- - The international convention on the creation of a compensation fund for damage due to hydrocarbon pollution;<br>- - The Work in Fishing Convention of 2007 (C 188)<br>- - The International Whaling Commission;<br>- - The Basel Convention;<br>- - The Rotterdam Convention |
| 2. Training & capacity building needs identified in the report – *suggest the priority training needs* | (a) Strengthen coordination, communication and collaboration mechanisms among the various stakeholders;<br>b) Strengthen the legal, technical and scientific capacities of the actors concerned by the internalization of the various instruments;<br>c) Make necessary budgetary allocations.<br>d) provide a focus on capacity building for the needs of the adoption of the blue economy and its institutionalization at the national and regional levels |

**Afternoon Session**

| Report Section | Comments and Suggestions |
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| 3. Elaborate on any additional challenges presented or suggest changes to these challenges? | Insufficient financial means for the participation of delegates (transport, accommodation, etc.)<br>b. Lack of ownership of the stakes (economic, strategic, legal, social, political, etc.) of participation by Member States<br>vs. Logistical constraints (mainly visas, internal authorizations)<br>d. The non-continuity in the representation of States at conferences and forums,<br>e. Lack of coordination among national institutions for participation<br>f. Lack of multidisciplinary representation of States<br>g. Lack of prior programming and planning<br>h. Plethora of conventions with a limited number of human and financial resources |
| 4. Are the Mechanisms / strategies identified for enhancing AU-MS participation in | The proposed strategies are relevant with the following remarks:<br>- Need to federate the capacities of institutions as the case of ATLAFCO networks (networks of training and research institutes), |

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| aquatic biodiversity and environmental fora or regimes sufficient, if not, highlight any additional changes with justification for the change.<br>*Financing, awareness, training* | - More precision on the mechanisms for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the strategies;<br>- Forecast and plan funding sources and mechanisms<br>- Pool existing financial resources (agencies, institutes, organisations, etc.)<br>- Raising awareness on the appropriation of financing mechanisms |
| 5. Coordination mechanisms – suggest how the regional groups can be organised? | Regional organizations can play very important roles in coordinating the efforts and federating the capacities of the States they represent for greater efficiency and to converge the paths of these countries in international fora (AU-IBAR, ATLAFCO, Benguela Commission, Indian Ocean Commission, CICOS, …)<br>- Need for coordination between these organizations to avoid duplication of efforts, redundancies and to strengthen the principle of subsidiarity.<br>- Need to harmonize the directory of experts for better multidiscipline and complementarity of expertise at AU-IBAR level |
| 6. Highlight what coordination structures are currently working in your region? | AU-IBAR, COMHAFAT, Benguela Commission, Indian Ocean Commission, CICOS, COREP, CSRP, CEAC, UMA, SADC, EAC, etc. |
| 7. State the lessons learnt in effective coordination that should be considered by other regions. | - Coordination between these organizations makes it possible to avoid duplication of efforts, redundancies and to reinforce the principle of subsidiarity.<br>- Draw from the experience of IGAD countries in the development of blue economy strategies and governance |
| 8. Does the report capture all relevant priority actions, if not, please add any missing priorities or suggest any other changes needed | Yes, in addition:<br>- Implementation of communication and visibility plans<br>- Stakeholder mapping and analysis<br>- Develop training manuals |
| 9. A monitoring framework is needed for the work, please suggest the overall impact that will be monitored going forward. | EFFECTS<br>- Better qualitative participation of Member States with multidisciplinary and exhaustiveness,<br>- Better understanding of the challenges of international instruments<br>IMPACTS<br>- Better conservation and management of living aquatic resources, and better use of these resources.<br>- Better conservation of the environment<br>- Strengthening food security,<br>- Conservation of economic interests within a framework of resource sustainability,<br>- Improvement of the socio-economic conditions of coastal populations |
| 10. Any other comments | Alignment with the framework of the fisheries reform strategy and that of the blue economy<br>- Consideration of the objectives of the AU Agenda 2063, and the UN SDGs 14<br>- Need to develop a logical framework with all the objectives, indicators, and implementation schedule |



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