

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SG REPORT ON THE BLUE ECONOMY

25 June 2015

1. The Blue Economy agenda is taking fast momentum at local, national, regional and global level as demonstrated by the number of existing initiatives aimed to promote the sustainable management and development of resources in freshwater bodies such as lakes and rivers as well as on coast, seas and oceans. The Blue Economy can play a very important role in contributing to structural transformation, sustainable economic growth and enduring social development. It can address crucial social considerations, such as food security, poverty alleviation and job creation. The largest sectors of the Blue Economy are fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, ports, energy and mining. The gains that can be achieved through raising the competitiveness of ports and improving transport infrastructure, including, in particular, the transport routes and development corridors that link landlocked, coastal and island States with the rest of the world can be considerable.
2. ECA Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) focused its 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) on the theme of “Harnessing the Blue Economy for the development of Eastern Africa.” It was held on 2-5 March 2015, in Antananarivo, Madagascar in close collaboration with the Government of Madagascar and produced the Antananarivo Communiqué. 2015-2025 having been declared the Decade of African Seas and Oceans, the meeting noted the importance of the Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want and the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS 2050). In order to accelerate the implementation of this strategy as well as increase the level of understanding of other relevant international frameworks, such as the Law of the Sea, the Antananarivo Communiqué recommends the development of a **Blue Economy handbook for Eastern Africa**. The handbook would contain a step-by-step guide on how to mainstream the Blue Economy into national policies, laws, regulations and practices.
3. Country ownership and taking account of country characteristics are essential in the effective implementation of regional initiatives (island states can be ‘sea-locked’ in a similar way that inland-states can be landlocked). These factors should be taken into account in the design and implementation of regional policies and development strategies, including development corridors.
4. Issues that remain to be tackled by African member States include awareness-raising on the access to the High Seas, which are open to all countries, whether they are landlocked, coastal or island states. Though many countries have established their exclusive economic zones and their continental shelves to their full potential under international law, others are yet to have done so, including through maritime boundary delimitations. Furthermore, it is important to increase African ownership of maritime fleets so that countries have much greater participation and influence over maritime trade and transport. Countries also need to pursue their work towards the reduction of trade barriers and inefficiencies while remaining cognisant of the importance of safety in maritime transport.
5. Tremendous resource development opportunities exist in areas beyond national jurisdiction and they can be harnessed through international partnerships and cooperation. With respect to the potential of sea and ocean energy and mineral

resources in Africa, member States are to continuously prioritize the mapping and assessment of marine resources and to build databases about their resources. The essential role that scientific and technical information plays in facilitating informed decision-making and contract negotiation was recognised by the Antananarivo Communiqué. Member States would also need to coordinate their actions to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU fishing), through the sharing of information on fishing vessels engaged in those illegal activities, through the implementation of joint monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement as well as through the adoption of port-based measures against such vessels.

6. The Antananarivo Communiqué emphasizes the priority to achieve and maintain peace and security and underscores the overarching importance of the need to balance economic interests with adherence to the highest environmental and social considerations, as encapsulated in the Rio+20 Outcome Document, “The Future We Want”. Member States are encouraged to establish the necessary institutions and build the relevant capacities to better harness the potential represented by the Blue Economy. Of particular relevance is the need to build research and development capacities and centres of excellence in such areas as oceanographic mapping, fisheries management, integrated development planning, port competitiveness and tourism connected with the Blue Economy.
7. UNECA is also closely partnering with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat with a view to contributing to its work. The Nairobi Convention Secretariat is supporting among others (1) the implementation of the Cairo Declaration of the 15th Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) on Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050 and Agenda 2063 on ecosystem-based management approaches for marine resources in the exclusive economic zones and adjacent waters;
8. (2) the facilitation of development and implementation of new transboundary initiatives for management of shared resources; (3) the preparation of regional guidelines on environmental management for oil and gas development, based on best practices, including a regionally coordinated strategic environmental assessment of social and environmental sustainability of oil and gas in the Western Indian Ocean Region (with GRID Arendal); (4) the finalisation of the climate change strategy for the Nairobi Convention Area; and (5) the promotion of policy interface in order to enhance informed decision making.