



Concept Note and Agenda
Validation of the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy
and Implementation Plan
and
Capacity Enhancement on the UNCLOS BBNJ Agreement
Dar es Salam, Tanzania

Holiday Inn Hotel and White Sands Hotel

1-4 April 2025

I. Introduction

The validation meeting on the Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan (AOGS) aims to strengthen regional cooperation and governance mechanisms for Africa's marine and freshwater ecosystems. The meeting will also serve as a platform to enhance Africa's capacity on the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement, ensuring a unified and coordinated approach to sustainable ocean governance.

By integrating discussions on the AOGS and BBNJ Agreement, this meeting will advance regional cooperation, strengthen ocean governance, and enhance capacity for effective implementation of multilateral environmental agreements while aligning with Africa's priorities and global commitments.

II. Africa Union Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan

Africa's aquatic and marine resources underpin critical socio-economic activities such as fisheries, shipping, tourism, and energy production. However, governance challenges—such as overlapping mandates, unregulated exploitation, inadequate regional cooperation and implementation—have impeded sustainable development.

The Africa Ocean Governance Strategy and Implementation Plan (AOGS) was developed under the mandate of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) to address fragmented governance and enhance coordination across existing ocean-related frameworks. Since its initial endorsement in the 2015 AMCEN Cairo Declaration and reaffirmations in the 2018 Nairobi and 2022 Dakar Declarations, the strategy has undergone extensive consultation and refinement. The strategy





provides a comprehensive framework for coordination, cooperation and implementation of Africa's existing and future governance frameworks.

The AOGS addresses these issues by:

- a) Offering a unified framework for ocean governance,
- b) Promoting regional cooperation to tackle transboundary challenges like illegal fishing, biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change impacts,
- c) Enhancing Africa's voice in global ocean policy and MEAs dialogues,
- d) By aligning with frameworks such as MEAs, AU Agenda 2063, the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS), and the AU Blue Economy Strategy.

The AOGS was developed through a consultative process that included:

- a) Three consultative meetings (18 to 21 November 2018, 21 and 22 October 2020, 15 and 16 June 2021): These meetings engaged experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to identify key governance gaps, harmonize perspectives, and propose actionable solutions.
- b) Collaborations with regional and global frameworks: The AOGS builds upon and complements the Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean region, enhancing synergies between regional and continental initiatives.
- c) A write-shop (16–18 September 2024, Mombasa): This session brought together representatives from the African Union Commission (AUC), UNEP, AU member states, and experts to finalize the draft, ensuring its comprehensiveness and alignment with existing frameworks.

Against the above, a draft AOGS and Implementation Plan is now ready for validation by member states and key stakeholders.

III. Africa Regional Consultations ahead of the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference

The 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), themed “Accelerating Action and Mobilizing All Actors to Conserve and Sustainably Use the Ocean,” underscores the urgent need for action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14). At its core, the conference focuses on the critical role of marine biodiversity in supporting ecosystem services, enhancing resilience to climate change, and sustaining ocean economies.

This session will take advantage of the presence of Member States and stakeholders to create awareness on UNOC3 and discuss possible common elements for Africa's engagement.

IV. Capacity Enhancement on the BBNJ Agreement





The BBNJ Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is a milestone treaty aimed at conserving and sustainably using marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It establishes mechanisms for marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments, and the fair and equitable sharing of marine genetic resources. While the Agreement presents significant opportunities for Africa, many countries face challenges related to technical capacity, policy integration, and ratification. This meeting will provide a platform to enhance understanding of the Agreement, explore its implications for regional governance, and develop strategies to strengthen Africa's role in global ocean governance.

The capacity-building session will equip participants with the knowledge and tools to:

- a) Deepen understanding of the BBNJ Agreement in the context of the Africa's ocean governance.
- b) Discuss the levels of Africa's preparedness to ratify and implement the Agreement.
- c) Strengthen Africa's collective voice in ongoing and future BBNJ-related negotiations and implementation discussions.

V. Objectives of the meetings

The objectives of the meeting are to:

- a) Validate the finalized draft AUOGS, ensuring it reflects member states and stakeholder priorities and align with regional and international commitments.
- b) Promote cross-sectoral collaboration by integrating ocean governance mechanisms.
- c) Enhance understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and its implications for African nations.
- d) Discuss a unified African view for the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference.

Draft Agenda

Day 1: 1 April 2025		
Time	Session Title	Moderator
08:00-09:00	Registration	
09:00-10:00	Opening Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Remarks- Africa Union Commission Statement by Nairobi Convention Statement by UNEP Reg ional Office for Africa Official Opening – TBC (Tanzania Host)	Moderator
10:00-10:30	Overview of the AOGS Journey Objective: Present the consultative process, outcomes and milestones and an overview presentation of the Strategy and its constitutive chapters	Norah Mugita UNEP





10:30 -11:00	Tea break and group photo	
Part 1: Rationale and Analysis of Ocean Governance in Africa		
11:00 -13:00	Session 1: Existing frameworks, gaps and opportunities in Ocean Governance in Africa Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To analyse the existing mechanisms and frameworks in the oceans space and analyse their relevance in coordination and cooperation of governance of oceans and their sectoral priorities. To review governance gaps, and the possible pathways and opportunities present to tackle these gaps Discussions	Robert Wabunoha UNEP
13:00–14:00	Lunch Break	
Part 2: Strategic Framing of the Strategy		
14:00–16:00	Session 2: Key elements of the Strategy Objective: to discuss mandate, scope, vision, goal, objectives, principles and strategic elements that underpin the strategy and how it aligns with regional and continental frameworks, including African Union initiatives and global commitments. Discussions	Georges Mba Asseko AUC
16:00	End of day	
Day 2: 2 April 2025		
9:00-9:15	Introduction to the strategic intervention pathways	Yvonne Waweru Oceans Expert
9:15-10:30	Session 3: Strategic Intervention Pathway 1: Enhancing Means of Implementation Objective: how the Strategy will be effectively implemented in terms of finance and resource mobilization; science and knowledge, and enhanced capacity Discussions	Yvonne Waweru Oceans Expert
10:30–11:00	Tea Break	
11:00-12:45	Session 4: Strategic Intervention Pathway 2: Coordination, Cooperation and Stakeholder Engagement	Koboto Oduetse AUC



	<p>Objective: explore how the strategy will provide a coordination mechanism and enhance stakeholder participation in the governance of the oceans space</p> <p>Discussions</p>	
12:30 – 13:00	Lunch break	
13:30 – 15:30	<p>Session 5: Panel Discussions - Institutional Framework for Ocean Governance Strategy</p> <p>Introductory presentation Panel Discussion: Panellists: AU-IBAR, EAC, SADC, ECOWAS, ECCAS, Nairobi Convention, Abidjan Convention</p> <p>Objective: To identify and refine the institutional mechanisms required to coordinate, oversee, and drive the implementation of the AOGS</p> <p>Discussions</p>	Linda Etta AUC
15:30-16:00	<p>Session 6: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms</p> <p>Objective: to analyse the monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the strategy.</p>	Joyce Nyagah UNEP
Day 3: 3 April 2025		
Part 3: Implementation Plan of the Strategy		
9:00 -12:30	<p>Session 7: Implementation Matrix and Operationalization</p> <p>Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide opportunity for member States to refine the detailed roadmap for implementing the AOGS across continental, regional, and national levels. To explore financial mechanisms for implementation To explore alignment of the AOGs with WIO-ROGs, AU Blue Economy Strategy, SDG 14 and other strategies 	Robert Wabunoha UNEP AfDB - TBC
12:30-13:00	Session 8: Summary of the validation workshop	
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 -16:00	Session 9: Africa's Common position at UNOC 3 - Aligning Regional Priorities with Global Commitments	Moustapha Kebe and Seraphin Dedi Ocean Experts



	Objective: To engage African stakeholders in shaping a regional position and action plan ahead of UNOC3	
16:00	End of day and networking Dinner	
DAY 4: 4 April 2024 – Moving the BBNJ Agreement in Africa		
09:00-9:30	Objective of the Meeting	Robert Wabunoha UNEP
09:30–10:45	Session 1: Introduction to the BBNJ Agreement: Key provisions, Ratification and Domestication processes Discussions Objective: to provide an overview of the BBNJ Agreement and its key provisions. Discussions	Yvonne Waweru Ocean Expert
10:45 -11:00	Tea break	
11:00–12:30	Session 2: Discussions on implications and readiness in Africa for the BBNJ Treaty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligations to Parties • Institutional capacity needs • Coordination and synergies Objective: to examine the readiness of national and regional institutions for implementation and actionable steps to enhance Africa's preparedness for effective participation in the BBNJ framework. Discussions	Jared Bosire Nairobi Convention
12:30- 13:30	Road towards the Preparatory Commission and the first Conference of the Parties to BBNJ Agreement Objective: To discuss Africa's level of preparedness and common Africa position Discussions	Marie-May (CEO SeyCCAT)
13:30-14:00	Closure of the Meetings Remarks by UNEP Remarks by Nairobi Convention Remarks by AUC Remarks by Host	
14:00	Lunch	
	End	