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**The first meeting of the African
Ocean Governance Strategy**
Istanbul, 19 October 2015

Abidjan Convention COP decisions (March 2014)

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Introduction

1. The tenth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on cooperation for the protection, management and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the Atlantic coast of the West, Central and Southern African region (Abidjan Convention) was held in Pointe Noire, Republic of the Congo, from 12 to 16 November 2012. The meeting was organized by the Regional Coordinating unit of the Abidjan Convention at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of the Congo to host the meeting.
2. The meeting had two segments, i.e., an expert segment, which included a workshop on “Financing Marine and Coastal Environmental Management Projects in Africa”, and a ministerial segment.

Part 1. Expert Segment

Introduction

3. The expert segment opened with the projection of a video documentary on Marine and Coastal Environmental Degradation in the Republic of the Congo. The documentary captured the major issues that are within the mandate of the Abidjan Convention, namely pollution from hydrocarbon exploration, exploitation and transportation; over-fishing and illegal and unregulated fishing; deforestation caused by unregulated logging and its consequent destruction of biodiversity and livelihoods of communities that depend on forest resources; as well as community-based action to manage their resources and to provide income generating activities. While the focus was on the Congo, the documentary could have been about on-going marine and coastal environmental challenges in almost every Contracting Party of the Abidjan Convention. It was therefore understandable that the documentary set the scene for subsequent deliberations and, indeed, became a recurring reference point for many participants.

I. Opening of the expert segment

4. The expert segment was opened at 10 a. m. on Monday, 12 November 2012. The Mayor of the first district of Pointe Noire, Mr. Victor Bayonne, welcomed participants in the COP10 meeting and wished all participants a peaceful stay in the city where, he said, many different international communities were living in harmony. The mayor noted that marine pollution was a threat to the environment, especially as a result of oil extractive activities in the case of the Republic of the Congo. He added that the Abidjan Convention was a laudable initiative, and hoped that it would be a catalyzer for strategies to protect and develop the marine and coastal environment and overall, the economic development and cooperation in West, Central and Southern Africa.
5. The representative of the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Vincent Sweeney, Coordinator of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), praised the Abidjan Convention Secretariat for the progress reached in the implementation of the various areas covered by the Convention. He conveyed the Executive Director’s wish that the COP10 would result in workable proposals and decisions for financing marine and coastal environmental management and development activities in the Atlantic coast of Africa.

He further noted that the GPA received a renewed mandate from governments through the Manila Declaration in January 2012, and stressed the important contributions of the regional seas programs as regional platforms from the implementation of the GPA.

6. Mr. Sweeney noted that the meeting provided an opportunity to share successful experiences and challenges encountered in the West African coast in addressing threats to the marine and coastal environment. The Executive Director of UNEP also conveyed the message through his representative that the presence of so many experts and partner agencies in the region spoke about their serious commitment in Africa. He wished the meeting to be of assistance in strengthening the Abidjan Convention, and the workshop to be effective in supporting the Convention in mobilizing resources to implement its goals. Finally, on behalf of UNEP, the representative expressed gratitude to the government of Congo for its efforts in the organization of COP 10 and their kind hospitality.
7. The Minister of Sustainable Development and Forestry Economics of the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Henri Djombo, began his address with a minute of silence in memory of the focal points from Togo and Senegal, who passed away between COP 9 and COP 10. He expressed the gratitude of the Government of the Republic of the Congo for the decision of the Abidjan Convention Contracting Parties to choose Pointe Noire, the economic capital of the country, as the venue for the first-ever event of UNEP in this city. The minister emphasized the importance of the meeting given the threats that biodiversity and ecosystems face, and the financial problems relating to the management of the marine and coastal areas in the region. He highlighted the need to adopt measures to solve those problems, which call for the provision of financial resources and for the implementation of the Convention. Without adequate means, it is useless to adopt recommendations or draft action plans. He challenged the participants asking them “Where can we get funds to deal with coastal environmental degradation and how can we access them?” He added that some developed countries have established green taxes to address environmental challenges.
8. The Minister then referred to the following as some of the expected outcomes of the meeting (1) the work programme 2012-2015, (2) the creation of National Implementation Committees, (3) action plans for the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems, (4) the development of environmental standards for oil exploration and exploitation on-shore and off-shore to combat their impact on the coastal and marine environment, (5) the need for delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, (6) the development of sustainable tourism, which could improve living conditions and help reduce poverty. He thus made a call for Africa to wake up and reflect on how to develop African fiscal mechanisms to enable the continent to address environmental issues. Finally, he thanked the President of the Republic of the Congo for his efforts to host the meeting in their country and he wished success to the meeting, which he then declared open.

5. Organizational Matters

A. Election of Officers

9. Following their election at the conclusion of COP9, the following officers took up their role at the Bureau of COP10: President: Republic of the Congo; Vice-Presidents: Cote d'Ivoire and Gabon; Rapporteurs: South Africa and Ghana —since the Ghana representative was absent, the meeting agreed to appoint The Gambia to fulfill the relevant functions.

B. Admission of Observers

10. There were thirty-five (35) observers both from States and organizations. The meeting decided to admit them without objections.

C. Appointment of Credentials Committee

11. A credentials committee was appointed consisting of Nigeria and Senegal.

D. Adoption of the rules of procedure of the meeting

12. It was agreed to follow the rules of procedure for meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties of the Abidjan Convention without changes.

E. Adoption of the agenda of the meeting—Expert segment

13. The preliminary agenda of the expert segment of the COP10 meeting was adopted without amendments and without objections.

III. Workshop on the Financing of Marine and Coastal Environmental Management Projects in Africa

A. Presentation by Dr. Paul Siegel on “Fundraising for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)”

14. Dr. Siegel started by posing the question before the Abidjan Convention of how to generate external support as the initial start-up and then sustain it with domestic funding sources. This required strategic fundraising and planning for the future whose success depended on successful marketing to convince those with capital about the need to fund projects. He specifically advised that what may appear important to technocrats may not be so apparent to political decision makers. Also, successful fundraising rested on recognizing that what is important is not the technocrat's perception, but the priorities of those who have the funds. He identified as possible local funding sources Ministries of Commerce, Planning, Foreign Affairs, Transportation, as well as communities, the private sector, among others. In addition to “traditional” mechanisms for accessing funds, he suggested exploring opportunities in rural development funds; debt-equity swaps and debt reduction programmes; payment for environmental services (basin management, carbon revenues, etc.); tourism (entry fees, concessions, contributions, and specific taxes, such as “green” taxes; entry and usage fees; airport fees; visa fees; hotel taxes; voluntary contributions—for a protected area, for communities; fishing revenues; tradable quotas; service; licenses; etc. Other possible sources are foundations, NGOs, corporate social investment funds from the private sector. At the regional level it is also possible to set up Conservation Trust Funds (as is done in Latin America for MPAs). Finally, Dr. Siegel suggested that the Abidjan Convention could play a leading role in generating funds for MPAs in its area through (a) its convening power and as a regional interlocutor; (b) technical strength; (c) financial coordination (given its collaboration with regional funders in concert with national representatives); and (d) collaboration with LMEs and stakeholders. The strengthening of communications is also important to broadcast what is working and where, perhaps in the form of an Abidjan Convention newsletter.

B. Presentations by Other Partners

15. The AU delegate discussed the AU 2050 Maritime and Marine Strategy and possible funding opportunities for in the Abidjan Convention area. He noted particularly that marine and coastal environmental management were a major concern of the AU and that delegates to its April 2010 experts meeting deliberated on issues and challenges of MPAs, which truly show Africa as “a big island”. He urged the workshop to come up with deep insights about funding opportunities to respond to the challenges facing the African continent because if nothing was done, Africa ran the risk of endangering the lives of future generations as was clearly evident in the just shown documentary on marine and coastal environment in the Congo.

16. The Question and Answer session was followed by presentations by partner organizations as case studies of the opportunities and challenges of fundraising for MPAs in the Abidjan Convention area. Presentations were made by OSPAR, the Programme Regional de Conservation de la Zone Cotiere et Marine en Afrique de l’Ouest (PRCM), BirdLife International, FIBA, RAPAC, Wetlands International, ReNatura Congo, UNEP as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Foundation BioGuinea in Equatorial Guinea, IUCN, the *Union Economique et Monétaire de l’Afrique de l’Ouest* (UEMOA), etc.

17. Dr. David Johnson, Executive Secretary of OSPAR, presented the experiences of the OSPAR Contracting Parties in describing ecologically and biologically significant areas (EBSAs) and in submitting these descriptions into the repository for EBSAs. In concluding his remarks he indicated that the experiences of the Regional Seas and others in describing EBSAs would be discussed at the 3rd International Marine Protected Area Congress (IMPAC 3), to be held in Marseille and Corsica in October 2013. Dr. Johnson also announced that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI), will co-host with the Abidjan Convention two workshops for capacity-building in describing EBSAs. The first workshop (4-8 February 2013) for West Africa will be held in Senegal. The second workshop, for Central and Southern Africa (8-12 April 2013), will be held in Namibia. He urged the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention to attend these 3 events.

DISCUSSIONS ON KEY ISSUES, REVIEW OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS AND DRAFT DECISIONS

C. Report of the Executive Director of UNEP on progress made in the implementation of COP 9 decisions

18. The Coordinator of the Abidjan Convention presented the report of the Executive Director of UNEP, which was endorsed.

D. Consideration of draft decisions

19. The experts reviewed the fourteen decisions proposed as contained in document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/5 and agreed on the text to be submitted to the ministerial segment for consideration and adoption. Three additional drafts were introduced, i.e., on cooperation with regional fisheries bodies, delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf of the countries of the Abidjan Convention, and collaboration with PENAf Ports.

E. Recommendations of the expert segment

20. The expert segment agreed on the following recommendations to be forwarded for consideration and adoption by the Ministerial segment:
- i. The Abidjan Convention should use its existing mandate as the unique institutional, political and legal framework that brings together the 22 countries of the Atlantic Coast of Africa to address issues related to the management of the marine and coastal environment including the mobilization of funds.
 - ii. The UNEP Regional Seas Program's Conventions that have African states as Contracting Parties (Abidjan, Nairobi, Jeddah, and Barcelona Conventions) should actively participate in the finalization and the implementation of the African Union 2050 integrated maritime strategy.
 - iii. Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention should take advantage of existing funding and other technical support mechanisms in the South and work through the UNDP South-South Cooperation program and other similar funding mechanisms to access funds and technical support for the sustainable management of their coastal and marine environmental resources.
 - iv. The partnership with the OSPAR Commission, which is currently under review should be finalized and strengthened to take advantage of their experience in the field of the development of environmental standards.
 - v. The Abidjan Convention and its Contracting Parties shall endeavor to adapt their communication strategy towards funding organizations when submitting their requests for funding.
 - vi. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat should establish a Clearing House Mechanism and create a communication and research platform within its Secretariat.
 - vii. The Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention should initiate a partnership development strategy for the purpose of raising funds for the implementation of the Convention's work program.
 - viii. The Abidjan Convention Secretariat should develop a long-term strategy for resource mobilization, leading to a permanent, sustainable financial mechanism for implementing the Convention's work.
 - ix. States are encouraged to contribute to the strategic plan of work on Marine Protected Area (MPA) for the Atlantic façade of Africa, developed in the framework of the joint IUCN-Abidjan Convention initiative, in order to strengthen regional networks of MPAs such as the Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO) and the Regional Network of Protected Areas in Central Africa (RAPAC) and complete a functional regional network at the scale of the convention.

F. Closure of the expert segment

21. The expert segment was declared closed at 12.05 a.m. on Thursday, 14 November 2012.

Part 2: Ministerial Segment

I. Opening of the ministerial segment

22. The ministerial segment of the tenth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention was launched at 10:45 a.m. on Thursday 15 November 2012, by the Communication Officer of the Ministry of Forestry and Sustainable Development of Congo, who served as master of ceremonies
23. Statements were delivered by Mr. Roland Bouity-Viaudo, the Lord Mayor of Pointe Noire, Ms. Jacqueline Alder, Coordinator of the Freshwater and Marine Ecosystems Branch, Division of Policy Implementation of UNEP, on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP; Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development and Forest Economics of the Republic of the Congo and Chair of the Bureau; and Mr. Firmin Ayessa, Permanent Secretary of the President's Office.
24. In his welcoming statement, Mr. Roland Bouity-Viaudo pointed out the urgency of the meeting given that the world is changing and there are environmental crises present including climate change. He was optimistic that the solidarity amongst the Contracting Parties would be effective in addressing environmental issues in the region. He would await the outcomes of the meeting to guide Pointe Noire in managing the city's coastal areas. He ended his statement with an invitation to participants to take some time to experience what the city had to offer.
25. In her opening statement Ms Jacqueline Alder pointed out the increased awareness of ocean issues in global forums and the number of initiatives underway in 2012. The relevance of the Abidjan Convention's Programme of Work to these initiatives was highlighted. The achievements of the Convention in meeting many of the COP9 Decisions was pointed out along with the improving compliance by the Parties to fulfilling their pledges over the last 12 months. She concluded by thanking the Contracting Parties for their support to the Abidjan Convention and their trust in UNEP to manage the Secretariat.
26. In his welcoming statement, Mr. Henri Djombo pointed out the vast coastline the Convention covers, its rich biodiversity and natural resources that are important to the economic activities in the Convention Area. He also noted the management challenges in the Convention are: lack of cooperation in managing some transboundary resources, inappropriate fishing practices, pollution and destruction of coastal habitats. To address these challenges he pointed out the need to continue to revitalize and strengthen the Abidjan Convention. To do this innovative financing mechanisms, the main theme of this COP 10, are needed. He thanked the Coordinating Unit for a job well done. He concluded by expressing his hope that the ministerial meeting will work with wisdom to make decisions and rise to the challenges for the long-term management of the marine and coastal environment of the Abidjan Convention area.

27. Minister of State, Permanent Secretary of the Office of the President of the Republic of the Congo, welcomed participants on behalf of the President of the Republic of the Congo, who could not attend the meeting. The President's statement was read in which he thanked UNEP for supporting the Abidjan Convention. He too reiterated the need to develop innovative financing mechanism and to address and encourage Contracting Parties to financially support the Convention through their payment of pledges. The President's message also called for joint action on issues raised by the Contracting Parties at this meeting.
28. The Minister of Environment, Housing and Urbanism of Benin delivered a speech in which he indicated the importance of the marine and coastal ecosystems effort for his country and the government efforts to safeguard and sustainably manage this ecosystem. He expressed his gratitude to UNEP and the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention for their support to Benin in managing the transboundary issues related to the phosphate waste in one of its neighboring countries. He concluded his remarks by expressing the strong support of Benin to the Abidjan Convention.

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

29. The Agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda set out in the document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/1 .Rev.1).
1. Opening of the Meeting
 - (a) Statement by the Lord Mayor of Pointe Noire
 - (b) Statement by the representative of the UNEP Secretariat
 - (c) Statement by the Chair of the Bureau
 - (d) Statement by the Minister for State as the representative of the host Government
 2. Organizational matters
 - (a) Adoption of the Agenda of the meeting – Ministerial/High-level segment, and organization of work
 3. Report of the Executive Director of UNEP.
 4. Consideration of draft decisions.
 5. Report of the Credentials Committee
 6. Adoption of decisions.
 7. Date and venue of the next Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties.

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