

COP 10 DECISIONS:

Decisions adopted by the 10th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, the Management and the Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region (Abidjan Convention),

Recalling the recent actions taken at the last Rio Summit, on the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and their resources as reflected in the document "The Future We Want".

Considering the decisions adopted at the twelfth special session of the Governing Council of UNEP on the need to include the health of the oceans and fisheries resource management plan for the green economy.

Taking into account the Yeosu Declaration adopted at the world exposition in Yeosu, Korea, from 1st May to 12 August, on the topic: 'Coasts and living oceans'.

Mindful of the opportunity represented by the concept of green economy for the socioeconomic development of African countries on the basis of the rational exploitation of marine and coastal natural resources.

Aware also that the economic and financial crisis which affects European countries will inevitably impact on the development assistance programs to African countries particularly in the context of the conservation of natural resources.

Whereas the decision taken by all GCLME countries to create a commission for the Guinea Current through a MOA at the Abidjan Convention.

Recalling decision CP9/1 approving the work program of the Convention for the period 2012-2015, and noting with satisfaction the level of implementation of tasks to date.

Warmly commending States which have made the effort to update their contributions to the special Trust Fund since COP 9.

Recognizing the financial contribution made by the Swedish Government to the implementation of the Abidjan Convention.

Being deeply grateful to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for the provision and equipment of an operating headquarter for the Abidjan Convention Secretariat. UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/12

Aware of the need to make changes in the bodies and the governance of the Abidjan Convention texts after more than 30 years of existence to adapt to today's challenges in the management of the marine and coastal environment on the continent.

Concerned about the constant degradation of mangrove ecosystems and taking into account the essential functions they play in the conservation of marine biodiversity.

Recognizing that tourism directly related to the functions and services of marine and coastal ecosystems, represents a potential source of income for the States parties, but that it remains insufficiently exploited.

Recognizing the need to strengthen mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention at the national level through the involvement of the various actors in the maritime sector, and noting the need to harmonize actions aimed at the implementation of the Abidjan Convention through a coherent advisory framework.

Recalling decision CP.9/13 relating to the revision of the texts of the Abidjan Convention and the adoption of the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in the Protection and Development of Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBSA) in the Western, Central and Southern African Region

Hereby decide:

Decision-/CP.10/1. 2013-2015 Programme of Work

1. To approve the renewal of the 2012-2015 programme of work for the 2013-2015 period;
2. To agree that the elements of the programme of work for the period 2013-2015 should continue considering as a priority, the same thematic areas of the programme of work for the period 2012-2015, namely:
 - a) Assessment of goods and services provided by ecosystems and marine and coastal habitats;
 - b) Management aimed at implementation of programmes and activities that seek to reduce or prevent degradation of the coastal and marine environment;
 - c) Coordination and legal aspects, including the revision and updating of the Abidjan Convention and its protocols, improved coordination of activities and the exchange of information and the strengthening of institutions for the implementation of the Convention;
 - d) Information and education, focusing on the exchange of information with communities, as well as education, awareness-raising, advocacy, community empowerment and capacity-building;
 - e) Cross-cutting and emerging issues, and funding strategies;
3. To reiterate the importance that the Contracting Parties continue to implement country-specific programmes and activities, as required by the Convention, in support of, and complementary to, the work programme of the Convention.
4. To request the Secretariat to include in the work programme 2013-2015 elements of collaboration with active partners in the field of marine and coastal environmental management activities in the region such as the PENAF, GRIDArendal, IUCN, WWF, PRCM, sub-regional fisheries commissions, the OSPAR Commission, the Convention on migratory species (CMS), Wetlands International, Birdlife International and other relevant organizations.

5. To urge the Secretariat to include in the 2012-2015 work programme elements that will lead to the implementation of the:

i) green economy principles,

ii) marine and coastal related Rio+20 decisions,

iii) AMCEN 14th meeting decisions on the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions,

iv) Africa Union 2050 Integrated Marine Strategy and, v) UNDP South-South Cooperation program.

6. To further urge the Secretariat to develop a proper communication plan that will help in raising the public awareness on both the Convention and marine and coastal environmental issues in the region.

Decision CP. 10/2. Financial matters

1. To agree to extend the Trust Fund for the region of the West African seas until the Parties otherwise agree.

2. To reiterate that the full revitalization of the Convention will depend on available funds and contributions made by the Contracting Parties;

3. To urge Parties to pay their contributions to the Special Trust Fund as soon as possible, and, for those which have not yet done so, to pay their arrears of contributions in accordance with the MoP.1/5/2008 decision;

4. To approve the 2013-2015 Convention budget, as submitted in the document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/6 ;

5. To welcome the financial contributions from the International Swedish development agency (SIDA), from the Ministry of Environment of the Kingdom of Norway, the Ministry of Environment and from Côte d'Ivoire sustainable development in support of the implementation of the Action Plan and the Abidjan Convention;

6. To recognize the financial contribution of the Global Environment Fund, in support of the implementation of the Action Plan and the Abidjan Convention;

7. To express their sincere thanks to the aforementioned organizations for their financial contributions to the implementation of the Abidjan Convention.

8. To agree on the improvement of the financial viability of the implementation of the Convention taking into account issues relating to coastal and marine areas in the policies, strategies, plans and national budgets;

9. To request the Secretariat to help develop projects and mobilize resources as well as to encourage contributions in kind to support the implementation of the Action Plan and the Convention at the national level.

10. To congratulate the Convention Bureau for its efforts towards the payment of arrears and contributions from Parties that have not yet done so.

Decision CP.10/3. Transformation of the Regional Coordination Unit into an Executive Secretariat

1. To reiterate the Contracting Parties decision to urge UNEP to carry out a study on the transformation of the Regional Coordination Unit into an Executive Secretariat by March 2013.

Decision CP.10/4. Abidjan Convention National Implementation Committees.

1. To recall article 4, paragraph 3, of the Convention texts which States that: "at the national level, Contracting Parties adopt laws and regulations guaranteeing the fulfillment of the obligations under this Convention and shall endeavor to harmonize their policies in this area.

2. To encourage Contracting Parties to establish national committees, according to the needs of each party, to serve as a framework for dialogue and action for the implementation of the Convention at the national level;

3. To urge that, when such a Committee was established, governmental, nongovernmental organizations and/or interested parties with the opportunity to contribute;

4. To request that the Secretariat prepares standard terms of reference for the national committees that will be adapted according to the realities of the Parties;

5. To ask the national committees to inform the Secretariat of their creation and their terms of reference.

Decision-/CP.10/5. Terms of reference of the Bureau of the Abidjan Convention and

Rules of procedure of the meetings of the Abidjan Convention Bureau.

1. To apply mutatis mutandis to the Organization of meetings of the Convention Bureau elected during the Conference of the Parties, the rules of procedure of the meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention.

2. To adopt the terms of reference of the COP Bureau such as presented in the document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/11

Decision CP.10/6 Amendments to the text of the Abidjan Convention

1. To note the progress made in the preparation of proposals for amendments to the text of the Abidjan Convention, as presented by the Secretariat in this meeting;

2. To request the Secretariat to circulate to the Contracting Parties a final draft of the proposals;

3. To commit to undertake at the national level the necessary internal consultations regarding the proposals, according to the applicable legislation in each Contracting Party;

4. To request the Secretariat to initiate extended regional consultations, first electronically, and then to organize a meeting of technical and legal experts to discuss the proposed amendments and agree on a final version to be presented for consideration by the Contracting Parties;

5. To invite the institutions and/or programmes of the Large Marine Ecosystems in the Abidjan Convention area, and other relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, to support this process.

Decision-/CP.10/7. Sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems in the area of influence of the Abidjan Convention

1. To urge Contracting Parties to capitalize and replicate on their territory, where possible and relevant, the best decisions and existing best practices, including the regional Charter on the conservation and sustainable use of mangrove forests by PRCM, so as to reduce the rate of degradation of the mangroves along the Atlantic coast of Africa.

2. To urge Contracting Parties to consider the importance of the preservation of mangroves; to incorporate it as a goal in forest policy, fisheries management, town planning, environmental, land use planning as well as in natural disaster reduction strategies; and to take legislative and administrative measures relevant for this purpose.

3. To request the Secretariat, in collaboration with the partners involved in the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems such as Wetlands International, IUCN, WWF, Birdlife International, PRCM, FIBA, etc. to propose to the Conference of the Parties a plan of action in order to develop a Protocol on the sustainable management of mangroves on the African Atlantic façade which, must include provisions for enforcement and compliance.

Decision-/CP.10/8. Environmental standards for the offshore exploration and exploitation activities of mining and mineral resources off the coasts of the States Parties

1. To urge the Contracting Parties to implement the following measures:

a) Under the Abidjan Convention, to exchange information, experiences and expertise in the field of security and maritime safety standards that not only take into account environmental and oceanographic features of the three large water currents (Gulf of Guinea, Canary and Benguela) but also universally recommended practices and procedures for the matter,

b) implement initiatives involving the relevant international organizations, such as IMO, UNEP, regional and sub-regional organizations and the extractive industries to develop regional environmental standards to follow when the exploration and exploitation of mining and minerals activities companies off the coasts of the States Parties.

2. To request the Secretariat to support, to the extent of available resources, the above mentioned process.

Decision CP. 10/9. Environmental Cooperation with the Ports in the Convention area

1. To recall Decision CP.9/1 (4) requesting the secretariat to establish a partnership with PENAf (Ports Environmental Network-Africa) in reducing environmental impacts from ports and shipping in the Abidjan Convention region.

2. To collaborate with PENAf in building environmental cooperation among the region's ports on issues concerning environmental impacts from ports and shipping activities for the purpose of protecting the marine and coastal environment, by:

- building capacity of the ports to promote environmental management and performance through education and awareness raising as well as research.

- promoting ports environmental best practice and information exchange and eco-initiatives.

Decision CP.10/10. Definition of the outer limits of the Contracting Parties' continental shelf

1. To recall Decision CP 8/5 to encourage Contracting Parties actively to engage in the process of defining the outer limits of their countries' continental shelf, as specified under article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and request the Secretariats of the large marine ecosystem commissions within the Convention area to support the member countries in making submissions for the delineation.

2. To establish, under the auspices of the African Union, a working group composed of high-level experts in charge of conducting studies on the delimitation of maritime borders between the Contracting Parties of the Abidjan Convention and make recommendations to COP 11 in this regard.

Decision CP.10/11. Hosting of the emergency coordination center for marine pollution in the Abidjan Convention zone

1. To take note of sending of the invitation to tender as well as selection criteria for the accommodation of the emergency coordination center for marine pollution in the Abidjan Convention zone to all Contracting Parties

2. To note that some bids received from States Parties are incomplete and do not correspond to the instructions such as indicated in the tender.

3. To note in addition that the licensing process cannot be done on the basis of such presented offers and therefore to urge other States Parties to submit to the Convention Office offers to host the centre within the six months following the COP10 so that COP11 may complete the attribution process for the accommodation of the headquarters of the emergency coordination Centre for marine pollution
4. To request IMO, UNEP and other relevant partners, to provide assistance to the Contracting Parties desiring to submit a proposal in that sense.

Decision-/CP.10/12. Marine and coastal ecosystems based sustainable tourism

1. To recognize the need for concerted efforts to improve awareness and the facilitation of dialogue between all stakeholders on the role played by marine and coastal ecosystems by providing key services for the maintenance of the ecological balance, recreation and sustainable tourism.
2. To request the Secretariat to contact the World Tourism Organization and other relevant organizations in the sector of sustainable tourism based on marine and coastal ecosystems to develop a document framework for strategic development of the sustainable tourism based on marine and coastal ecosystems for the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention
3. To ask State Parties who have experience in the field of sustainable tourism based on marine and coastal ecosystems to contribute to the development of these initiatives; by sharing this experience and best practices with other State Parties to the Convention that are less advanced in this field.

Decision-/CP.10/13. The work of the Convention with regards to the interface between the freshwater courses and marine and coastal ecosystems

1. To remind that in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of the COP8/4 decision, it was decided i) to support the use of the ecosystem approach to management as a tool to preserve marine and coastal zones by including the involvement of the upstream countries and ii) to establish a link, in terms of management, between the rivers' basins, estuaries and coastal waters to ensure their sustainable management under the Abidjan Convention,
2. To furthermore remind that human activity (agricultural, industrial, urban refuse) conducted in those large basins not only contribute to the transport of nutrients and water towards the marine environment, but are also diverse and diffuse sources of pollution of the marine environment,

3. To request the Secretariat to undertake consultations and work on this issue under the Convention in Abidjan and in close cooperation with the basins' authorities such as the Authority of the Niger basin, the Gambia River Development Organization, the Senegal River Development Organization, the Volta River's basin Authority, the Congo Oubangui Sanga International Commission, etc. to ensure integrated management of these basins coasts and adjacent marine waters.
4. To urge the States Parties to the Abidjan Convention to promote the integrated management of basins, coastal and maritime areas in accordance with the rules and principles established by the international and regional conventions, including the Abidjan Convention, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Use of International Watercourses and the Convention on the protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area.
5. To request the Secretariat take into account conventions in force in the field, to develop an action plan for the possible development of an additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on integrated management of coastal and marine areas like the Nairobi Convention.
6. To encourage the Abidjan Convention to establish close partnership links with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from LandBased Activities (UNEP/GPA) for an action synergy geared towards the sustainable management of marine and coastal areas

Decision-/CP.10/14. Establishment of the Guinea Current Commission by a protocol of the Abidjan Convention

1. To take note of the Abidjan Declaration through which the Ministerial Committee of the interim Commission for the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem decided, on May 11, 2012, to establish the Guinea Current Commission by a protocol to the Abidjan Convention.
2. To urge the Secretariat, in collaboration with UNEP, FAO, UNDP, UNIDO and the interested Parties, to begin preparations and, with the support of the eventual GCLME SAP Implementation Project, develop a draft protocol to the Abidjan Convention establishing the Guinea Current Commission.

Decision-/CP.10/15. Cooperation with Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs)

1. To give a priority role to the Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) to work together with the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, in the elaboration and implementation of sustainable fisheries management policies, programmes and projects;
2. To strengthen coordination and cooperation with the RFBs whose competence areas overlap with or are adjacent to that of the Abidjan Convention to achieve common goals in relation to ecosystems supporting sustainable use of natural resources, by:
 - participating in the meetings of RFBs and facilitating participation of RFBs in relevant meetings of the Abidjan Convention;

- exploring fields of cooperation (e.g. environmental policies and legislation; ecosystem approach; data collection and information sharing and exchange; capacity building; marine protected areas; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing etc.);
- Concluding MoUs with the different RFBs.

Decision-/CP.10/16. Ad hoc Committee on science and technology

1. To approve the report of the Secretariat defining the mandate, the institutional structure, mode of operation and funding of the ad hoc Committee on science and technology as requested by the COP19.
2. To create an ad hoc science and Technology Committee to provide scientific and technical assistance to the Secretariat in the Office, and through them, to the Conference of the Contracting Parties that will work on the basis of the elements contained in the above cited report.
3. To request the Secretariat to inform the Contracting Parties of the submission deadlines, by the Bureau, on proposals for nominations to the ad hoc Committee on science and technology and to inform Contracting Parties on the disciplines that should be represented on the Committee according to the priorities defined by the COP
4. To urge the Secretariat to organize parallel to the next Conference of the Parties, the first meeting of the Science and Technology Committee knowing that one of the topics of the that meeting should be the operationalization of article 22 of the Abidjan Convention with regards to reports on the implementation of the Convention at the level of the States Parties.

Decision CP.10/17. Study of a potential ‘environment tax’ on extractive and polluting industries as a revenue source for the Abidjan Convention

1. To consider the importance of natural resources, mining and minerals found within the waters and coastal areas under the jurisdiction of the African States party to the Abidjan Convention;
2. To recognize that the exploitation of these resources through mining, oil exploration and extraction, tourism, transportation, certain fishing practices and other extractive or polluting industries must be done sustainably to minimize environmental damage to these coastal states;
3. To seize the opportunity offered by the emergence of a ‘Green Economy’ approach for the sustainable development of African countries based on the sound use of marine and coastal resources;
4. To request, as a consequence, the Secretariat to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility to implement an ‘environment tax’ on extractive and polluting industries as a source of adequate and predictable revenue;
5. To request the Executive Director of UNEP to provide the Secretariat with the necessary financial resources for this study.

Decision CP.10/18. Thanks to the host country

1. To express their gratitude and their thanks to the Government and people of the Republic of the Congo for their warm hospitality and their active involvement in the successful organization of the tenth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention. A special motion is addressed the Head of State, His Excellency President Denis Sassou Nguesso, for his personal commitment to the success of this event.

UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/12