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**Twelfth meeting of 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 Africa Region**

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 27–31 March 2017

## **Draft report of the twelfth meeting of 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 Africa Region**

### **Introduction**

1. The twelfth meeting of 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 Africa Region (Abidjan Convention) was held at the Hotel Le Vaisseau (expert segment) and at the Maison de l'Entreprise (ministerial segment), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 27 to 31 March 2017. The theme of the meeting was "Integrated ocean management policy in Africa". The meeting was held in accordance with article 17 of the Convention, which stipulated that the Contracting Parties should meet in ordinary session every two or three years. The meeting marked the end of the Convention's revitalization process, initiated in 2010, and launched its active phase.
2. The meeting was divided into two parts:
  - (a) Expert segment;
  - (b) Ministerial segment.

### **Part one: Expert segment**

#### **I. Opening of the expert segment**

3. The expert segment was opened at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, 27 March 2017, by the Chair of the meeting, Mr. Lisolomzi Fikizolo (South Africa), representing the Chair of the Bureau.
4. Opening statements were made by Mr. Abou Bamba, Regional Coordinator and Secretary of the Abidjan Convention, UNEP, and by Mr. Fikizolo. The opening address was delivered by Ms. Anne Désirée Ouloto, Minister for Urban Waste Management and Sanitation of Côte d'Ivoire.
5. In her remarks, Ms. Ouloto stressed the importance of using the marine and coastal environment sustainably in order to preserve and enhance its potential for present and future generations. Preservation of the environment and conservation of biodiversity, along with sustainable

use of marine and coastal resources, were key to the social and economic development of the countries that were parties to the Convention. The programme of activities and budget for the period 2017–2020 would help set the agenda for conservation and use of those resources. She drew attention to the threats to the marine and coastal environment from human activities, including navigation, overfishing, mangrove destruction, urbanization and settlement, and mineral extraction. Coordination and harmonization of activities by all stakeholders at the local, national and international levels was essential for combating those challenges. She expressed the hope that the week's deliberations would be fruitful.

## **II. Organizational matters**

### **A. Election of officers**

6. It was decided that the officers of the eleventh meeting of the Contracting Parties would continue in office until the conclusion of the meeting, when a new Bureau would be elected.

### **B. Participation of observers**

7. It was agreed that all sessions of the meeting would, unless otherwise decided, remain open to those representatives of international bodies and national governmental and non-governmental organizations who were attending the meeting as approved observers.

### **C. Credentials committee**

8. A credentials committee, comprising members from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mauritania and a representative of the secretariat, was appointed to examine the credentials of participants.

### **D. Adoption of the rules of procedure of the meeting**

9. It was agreed that the *Rules of Procedure for Meetings and Conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention* (submitted to the meeting as document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/Ref.3) would govern the procedures of the meeting.

### **E. Adoption of the agenda**

10. The provisional agenda (UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/1) was adopted.

## **III. Workshop on integrated ocean management policies in Africa**

### **A. Introduction**

11. Mr. Bamba, introducing the workshop, said that integrated ocean management was a dynamic process, given the ever-changing nature of the marine and coastal environment and the human impacts on it. It was therefore necessary to bring on board all stakeholders to identify the problems and issues involved, along with possible solutions; to formulate objectives to be attained; and to implement solutions. To support and inform that process, it was essential to build the database on the marine and coastal environment and its use and development, in order to establish a baseline of knowledge against which to measure its future evolution; to identify indicators; to ascertain how to work in a more coordinated manner; and to monitor the success of any measures undertaken. Actions taken on the marine and coastal environment should be within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, which adopted a development-oriented approach to conservation, emphasizing improvement in people's lives alongside protection of the environment. Integrated management of coastal areas therefore required a holistic, multilateral and multisectoral approach, taking account of physical and ecological aspects and biodiversity, in addition to economic, social, cultural, and legal and administrative factors. The long-term roles of various actors needed to be clarified, with the ultimate objective of establishing mechanisms to ensure a balance between human activities and natural resources and thus achieve sustainable development.

### **B. Presentations by experts**

12. A number of experts gave presentations on various aspects of integrated ocean management and the application of the concept, particularly in relation to policy development in Africa. Presentations were made by Mr. Tibor Vegh, Policy Associate, Environmental Economics Programme, Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, Duke University, United States of America; Mr. Lawrence P. Hildebrand, Head of the Oceans Sustainability Department, World Maritime University, Sweden; Mr. Justin Ahanhanzo, Regional Liaison Officer, Marine Policy

Department, and Regional Coordinator, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Mr. Pierre Failler, Director of Research, Department of Economics, Portsmouth University, United Kingdom; Mr. André Share, Head, Oceans Economy Secretariat, South Africa; Mr. Louis Léandre Ebobola Tsibah, Director-General for the Environment, Gabon; Ms. Hazel Thornton, Marine Programme, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, United Kingdom; Mr. Yacouba Cissé, International Law Commission; and Mr. Jeffrey Andrews, Environmental Security Program, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM).

13. Mr. Vegh, in his presentation, said that the United States had adopted a policy implementation plan containing recommendations and guidance for how to better manage the country's ocean and coastal resources and ensure the growth of the ocean economy. He encouraged countries on the Atlantic coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa region to create ocean policy implementation plans adapted to their specific needs. Noting that a blue economy concept was required to align economic growth and environmental health, he gave several examples of blue economy policies aimed, among others, at securing access to resources; maintaining and improving ecosystem integrity; promoting social and economic development; and building resilience. He stressed the importance of incorporating the ocean's natural capital assets into planning and policy; using integrated ocean management to reduce risk; and developing monitoring tools such as a blue economy index.

14. Mr. Hildebrand, in his presentation, outlined progress in developing integrated ocean management policies. Noting that UNEP and the World Maritime University had recently signed a memorandum of understanding, he emphasized the need to strengthen such collaboration in order to enhance education and research and support the work of the Abidjan Convention. Conventions, laws and plans needed to be translated into action without adding pressure to oceans, which constituted diminishing natural capital. While advances in science, technology and innovation would help to address many environmental challenges, they should not be used as an excuse to ignore environmental problems. Though the need for more integrated and coordinated ocean management was widely recognized, sectoral interests and institutions were entrenched, and there was a tendency to defend the status quo. The requirements of nations and ocean industries also needed to be considered in order to encourage them to help protect the ocean environment.

15. Mr. Ahanhanzo spoke about the unique contribution of African coastal observation systems to strengthening the Abidjan Convention in the context of Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 14, on climate and oceans. The Global Ocean Observing System for Africa (GOOS-Africa) helped to generate knowledge and raise awareness in a number of areas, including oil and gas shipping, maritime transport and trade, offshore mining, fishing and tourism. He concluded his presentation by describing the critical role of satellite remote sensing and the need for space-based observation of coastal and marine ecosystems.

16. Mr. Failler, in his presentation on the valuation of the marine and coastal ecosystem services of Africa's Atlantic seaboard, and its ecological, economic and policy implications, described the blue economy and blue growth in the African context, and more specifically in the framework of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the African Integrated Maritime Strategy and the initiative on harnessing the blue economy for Africa's development of the Economic Commission for Africa. Discussing facets of the blue economy such as oil and gas extraction, fishing activities, mariculture, coastal seabed mining and coastal tourism, he said that valuation and monitoring were needed to define priorities for economic development and ecosystem conservation, to include non-market ecosystem services in blue economy strategies and plans, and to better manage marine and coastal ecosystems.

17. Mr. Share, in his presentation, described how Operation Phakisa in South Africa worked to achieve objectives such as the implementation of existing frameworks, data collection and sharing, the establishment of integrated ocean management plans, the enhancement of capacity to utilize ocean resources, and regional and international cooperation. Marine spatial planning was a key element of the programme, and several projects were in place to unlock the economic potential of his country's oceans. There was intersectoral collaboration in a wide range of areas, including marine transport, offshore oil and gas exploration, aquaculture, marine protection services, small harbours development, tourism, skills development, and research, technology and innovation. Operation Phakisa had the potential to contribute significantly to the economy.

18. Mr. Ebobola Tsibah gave a presentation on the Blue Gabon programme for integrated management of oceans and coastal zones. His country had over 800 kilometres of coastline, featuring rich marine biodiversity, and some 70 per cent of the population lived in coastal areas. Threats to the marine and coastal space such as clandestine immigration, piracy, natural catastrophes, illicit fishing and coastal erosion had led to the creation of an integrated national maritime strategy.

19. Ms. Thornton spoke about the Ocean Synergies Initiative, a partnership that supported countries' efforts to achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals through synergies with Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development). The world's oceans faced many pressures, including pollution, development, overexploitation of resources and competition for space, and many countries had limited resources for tackling those problems. The "ocean synergies approach" linked Goal 14 to related targets under the other Goals, thereby achieving savings in costs and resources. The Initiative followed a two-stage approach: in the first stage, countries conducted a sustainable development assessment to establish a baseline and identify opportunities for synergies; in the second stage, the outcomes of the assessment were translated into actions. The next steps would be to identify countries and regions interested in exploring the approach; identify potential sources of funding; and roll out country-specific initiatives.
20. In his presentation, Mr. Cissé identified the challenges and opportunities for African States with regard to integrated ocean management. The wide range of challenges included the definition of national maritime jurisdictions and the delimitation of maritime boundaries; illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; ports and maritime pollution; and piracy, spying and underwater cables and pipelines. There was a need to harmonize national legislation, raise awareness of the cost of deficient ocean governance, and embed integrated national ocean governance strategies in multilateral, regional and subregional legal instruments.
21. Mr. Andrews, in his presentation on the AFRICOM Environmental Security Program, said that his Government's security policy recognized environmental issues as key factors affecting local, regional and global security. Climate change in particular, with its attendant effects, could weaken governance and lead to economic collapse, human migration and conflicts. Accordingly, the Program sought to build the capacity of African partner nations to deal with environment-related challenges. The Power Africa programme, for example, aimed to increase provision of clean, efficient electricity generation capacity in six partner countries.

### C. Recommendations

22. The representative of the secretariat outlined the key recommendations emerging from the expert presentations:
- (a) To enhance collaboration between the Abidjan Convention secretariat and the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions in order to support capacity-building activities relating to the blue economy in the countries of the Convention;
  - (b) To develop an internship programme between the Convention secretariat and the World Maritime University and encourage rapid implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the University and UNEP;
  - (c) To utilize available data and fill the gaps in data acquisition and production;
  - (d) To encourage countries to involve grass-roots stakeholders in policy formulation;
  - (e) To reinforce synergies between the Abidjan Convention and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in the framework of the GOOS-Africa programme for data collection and distribution;
  - (f) To mainstream the Abidjan Convention national implementation committees to assist them in bringing together the different stakeholders in the ocean debate at the national level;
  - (g) To coordinate data collection efforts by various agencies to assist in establishing a resource centre for Africa on marine and coastal matters;
  - (h) To encourage initiatives highlighting the economic value of healthy ecosystems;
  - (i) To disseminate information on Operation Phakisa, including in the French language, throughout the countries of the Abidjan Convention in order to promote the adoption of similar approaches;
  - (j) To create a centre of excellence for training on marine and coastal issues;
  - (k) To encourage the countries of the Abidjan Convention to request funding from subregional development banks for projects on integrated coastal zone management;
  - (l) To support and promote the Ocean Synergies Initiative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.
23. It was agreed that the recommendations would be submitted for consideration at the ministerial segment and possible adoption.

#### **IV. Report of the Executive Director of UNEP on progress made in implementing the decisions adopted at the tenth and eleventh meetings of the Contracting Parties**

24. Under the item, the representative of the secretariat presented on the report by the Executive Director of UNEP, set out in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/3.

25. During the ensuing discussions, participants congratulated the secretariat on progress in implementing the draft decisions. Two representatives asked that tools and timelines be put in place to measure the impact of the Convention, and several participants suggested that the achievements to date be formally recognized. Several representatives urged those Contracting Parties that had not already done so to pay their contributions to the Trust Fund in full, with one representative noting that contributions could be made by offering the secretariat technical support from high-level experts. The representative of a regional organization asked that the objectives and priorities of the Convention be aligned with those set out in Agenda 2063. Concerning ocean governance and assessment, one representative said that the economic potential of oceans should be maximized and a balance achieved between environmental integrity and sustainable development. Another representative requested that the secretariat increase its efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Convention focal points, saying that they lacked the necessary resources to carry out their mandate. One representative said that Contracting Parties should work together to address the issue of excessive seaweed washing onto the region's beaches, and to find ways in which the seaweed could be used to benefit the region.

#### **V. Report of the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Science and Technology**

26. Under the item, the representative of the secretariat presented a report on the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Science and Technology (document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/inf.11). The main purpose of the meeting, held from 15 to 17 March 2017 at the office of the secretariat, had been to provide guidance to Contracting Parties and the secretariat on technological and scientific issues covered in the agenda for the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties, taking into account the activities proposed for inclusion in the budget. The experts on the Ad Hoc Committee had analysed the documents and draft decisions prepared for the meeting, including the draft protocols and amendments to the Convention, to ensure that the content was of a sufficiently high standard to put before the meeting. The documents had also been sent to the Contracting Parties to enable national consultations on their content, and the feedback from the countries had been incorporated into revised texts.

#### **VI. Consideration of draft decisions**

##### **A. Draft decision [CP.12/1]: Work programme for the period 2017–2020**

27. The representative of the secretariat presented the work programme for the period 2017–2020, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/4. He described the rationale behind the programme, its main components and the proposed activities to be undertaken.

28. During the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives praised the programme. One representative said that it was well developed and took into account the concerns of the region. Some representatives raised concerns related to identification of funding sources and mobilization of resources to implement the planned activities, and about the lack of key performance indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress in implementation of the proposed activities. It was agreed that Contracting Parties could submit comments on the programme of work to the secretariat to assist in refining the document.

29. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

##### **B. Draft decision [CP.12/2]: Financial matters**

30. In a closed session, the representative of the secretariat presented a report on financial matters, in particular the financial report of the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund for the period 2014–2016, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/5. He said that the Convention had been operating with limited budgetary resources, largely because the

contributions of several Contracting Parties were outstanding, as a consequence of which the resources available did not accord with the mandate and activities of the secretariat.

31. During the ensuing discussion, general concern was expressed about the problems arising from non-payment of contributions. Several participants drew attention to the difficulties faced in making timely contributions, including the fact that invoices from UNEP tended to arrive after countries had already made their budgetary allocations for the following financial year. One participant asked for more information on the apparent difficulty of opening a bank account for the secretariat in Côte d'Ivoire. Another participant proposed that those Contracting Parties with outstanding payments develop a payment plan that the focal points could endorse and pursue. Yet another stressed the important role played by the focal points and the need to support them in that role. Responding on the matters raised, the representative of the secretariat said that discussions on opening a bank account for the secretariat were continuing. The secretariat would follow up on the other issues raised.

32. The chair summarized the recommendations that had emerged from the discussion, including that Contracting Parties make every effort to submit timely payments and encourage one another in that regard; that those with overdue payments draw up a payment plan stipulating how they intended to rectify the shortfall; that efforts be made to submit invoices in a timely manner, and to reinforce the capacity of the national focal points; and that donors and partners be assured that their funding was matched by similar commitments from the Contracting Parties.

33. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

### **C. Draft decision [CP.12/3]: Amendment of the text of the Abidjan Convention**

34. The representative of the secretariat presented the proposed amendments to the Convention text, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/7. He explained that proposals had been made at the ninth and eleventh meetings of the Contracting Parties to amend the text to reflect current issues relevant to the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa region. A contact group had thus been established to update the Convention text and associated protocols.

35. The chair of the contact group on amendments to the Abidjan Convention, and on the draft additional protocols to the Convention, said that the proposed amendments were in line with the objectives of the Convention as set out in the original text, adopted in 1981. The preamble had been updated to include the blue economy, sustainable development and climate change; definitions of "coastal erosion", "dumping", "marine and coastal biodiversity" and "ballast water" had been added to the text; and it was proposed that the geographical scope of the Convention be expanded to include countries that were not Contracting Parties and areas that extended beyond the Convention's scope, given the transboundary nature of river basins. Two alternative ways forward had been suggested: to consider the proposed changes as amendments to the Convention, or, given the substantive nature of the proposed amendments, to consider the Convention as new, which would require a new ratification process.

36. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives praised the work of the contact group. Two representatives expressed concern about the expansion of the geographical scope of the Convention, which they said might create confusion and hinder implementation. Several other representatives said that the scope should be expanded, given that many pollutants reaching the sea originated from inland river basins, and that environmental marine and coastal issues required an integrated approach.

37. It was agreed that the Convention would be considered amended rather than new, that the new articles would be approved, subject to further revisions taking into account comments by the representatives and proposals by the contact group, and that the proposal to expand the geographical scope of the Convention required further consideration.

38. The draft decision was approved.

### **D. Draft decision [CP.12/4]: Work of the Convention on the interface between freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems**

39. The chair of the contact group on amendments to the Abidjan Convention, and on the draft additional protocols to the Convention, reported on the contact group's work on the proposed text for a protocol on integrated coastal zone management, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/8.

40. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**E. Draft decision [CP.12/5]: Sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems in the Abidjan Convention area**

41. The chair of the contact group on amendments to the Abidjan Convention, and on the draft additional protocols to the Convention, reported on the contact group's work on the proposed text for a protocol on sustainable mangrove management, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/9.

42. After a brief discussion on the proposed text, the draft decision was approved without amendment.

**F. Draft decision [CP.12/6]: Environmental standards for oil and gas exploration activities off the coasts of the Contracting Parties**

43. The chair of the contact group on amendments to the Abidjan Convention, and on the draft additional protocols to the Convention, reported on the contact group's work on the proposed text for a protocol on environmental norms and standards for offshore oil and gas activities, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/10. After a brief discussion of the proposed text, the chair said that the various comments made would be taken into account in finalizing the text of the protocol.

44. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**G. Draft decision [CP.12/7]: Integrated coastal and ocean management policy**

45. The representative of the secretariat presented the regional policy on the integrated management of coastal and marine areas, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/12. The aim of the policy, he said, was to improve coordination and communication between various government and other agencies in the management of coastal and marine areas in order to avoid duplication and ensure integrated and efficient resources management.

46. During the ensuing discussion, several representatives raised relevant issues, including the need for safeguarding measures to ensure that actions did not have unforeseen negative consequences elsewhere; the importance of engaging specialist advice to ensure that decision-makers understood the ramifications of their policies; the advisability of studying the feasibility and efficiency of proposed actions; the possible role of an overarching national body for the implementation of marine and coastal management projects; the need to raise awareness of marine and coastal issues at the ministerial level; the importance of cross-border collaboration in the management of marine and coastal resources; and the urgency of combating the growing problem of invasive species.

47. It was agreed that additional elements – for example, regarding the provision of technical assistance at the national level – could be added to the decision.

48. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**H. Draft decision [CP.12/8]: Establishment of the Guinea Current Commission by means of a protocol to the Abidjan Convention**

49. The representative of the secretariat presented the draft decision.

50. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives said that the establishment of the Commission could lead to significant progress on the environmental front. Noting that six years had passed since countries had requested that the Commission be created, several representatives asked for an explanation of the delay and whether it resulted from a lack of funding. The secretariat was asked to provide clarifications concerning whether the priorities of the Contracting Parties concerning the establishment of the Commission had evolved since the initiative was first launched.

51. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**I. Draft decision [CP.12/9]: Revitalization of the action plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the South-Eastern Atlantic**

52. The representative of the secretariat presented the draft decision, giving an overview of the revitalization of the action plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal zones of the West, Central and Southern Africa region. The process was ongoing to ensure that there were synergies between the action plan in question, the proposed text for a protocol to the Convention concerning the concerted and sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems, the

action plan on the integrated management of coastal areas, and international norms and standards for offshore oil and gas exploration and exploitation.

53. In the ensuing discussion, one representative asked the secretariat to provide an overview of the action plan and explain why it needed to be revitalized. The representative of the secretariat replied that the action plan had not been updated since its establishment in 1981, whereas the challenges facing the marine environment had evolved.

54. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

#### **J. Draft decision [CP.12/10]: Coastal erosion in the context of climate change**

55. The representative of the secretariat, presenting the draft decision, said that the first draft of the programme of work for the period 2017–2020 incorporated the issue of coastal erosion, which represented a significant threat to the region's economy.

56. In the ensuing discussion, representatives agreed on the importance of adopting the decision and on the need for multinational collaboration on the issue. They encouraged the secretariat to engage with the relevant financial institutions to also include countries in Central and Southern Africa that were affected by coastal erosion.

57. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

#### **K. Draft decision [CP.12/11]: Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas**

58. The representative of the secretariat, presenting the draft decision, emphasized the need to harmonize information on the protection of marine ecosystems in order to bridge the gaps that existed in the region with regard to the classification of marine protected areas.

59. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed support for the draft decision. Several described the difficulties encountered by their countries in establishing marine protected areas in a timely way and noted that economic and environmental interests sometimes clashed.

60. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

#### **L. Draft decision [CP.12/12]: Conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction**

61. The representative of the secretariat, presenting the draft decision, emphasized the need for African countries to participate in global discussions on marine biodiversity.

62. In the ensuing discussion, representatives agreed that it was indeed essential for African countries to take part in such discussions, and to increase technology transfer and capacity-building efforts. One representative mentioned the difficulty of interested countries in issues concerning marine areas that were in the high seas, beyond any country's jurisdiction, and questioned the ability of the Contracting Parties to implement the decision, considering the limited resources available to them. Some participants expressed concern about the capacity needed to implement it and the issue of how information should be shared among countries.

63. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

#### **M. Draft decision [CP.12/13]: Combating marine and coastal invasive species**

64. The representative of the secretariat, presenting the draft decision, introduced the Regional Strategy for the Management of the Coastal and Marine Alien and Invasive Species of West Africa, contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/11. The matter was particularly pertinent given the invasion of much of the coastline of West Africa by *Sargassum* seaweed. Expert consultations had concluded that *Sargassum* should be considered in the wider context of aquatic alien and invasive organisms in the marine and coastal ecosystems of West Africa.

65. There was broad support for the draft decision, and several participants reported the difficulties faced by their countries in dealing with *Sargassum* and other invasive species. One participant said that greater clarity was needed on the scope of the decision and the organisms to be included.

66. The draft decision was approved without amendment.



**N. Draft decision [CP.12/14]: Illegal trade, illicit trafficking, consumption and other uses of protected, endangered and/or vulnerable marine and coastal fauna and flora**

67. The representative of the secretariat, introducing the decision, said that the issue had not received the prominence given to other similar illegal activities, such as elephant poaching, and deserved more attention.

68. A number of participants expressed firm support for the draft decision, while recognizing the scale and complexity of the challenge. One participant said it was important to adopt a holistic approach – for example, by harmonizing legislation so that similar penalties were applied in all countries. Another said that greater surveillance and monitoring were needed. The representative of a non-governmental organization said that illegal consumption of aquatic life was a growing problem similar to that of illegal trade in “bush meat”, and that definitions needed to be extended to cover such phenomena. It was also important to enforce applicable legislation at the local level.

69. Other matters raised included the capture of fish while they were spawning, which limited their production and shortened their lifespan; the benefits of sensitizing local populations to the value of preserving marine turtles and other species; and the need to ensure that law enforcement officials were fully informed about illegal trade and related matters.

70. The draft decision was approved as amended with text on harmonization of legislation and the need to train law enforcement agencies and officials.

**O. Draft decision [CP.12/15]: Sustainable management of lagoons**

71. The representative of the secretariat, introducing the decision, said that the item recognized the important role played by lagoon environments and their ecosystem functions in the socioeconomic well-being of local populations.

72. Several participants reported the challenges faced by their countries in the preservation of lagoon environments, including pollution from industrial and extractive activities, contamination and the associated threat to food supplies, waste disposal and infilling by littoral communities, and discharge of wastewater and chemicals. There was strong support for the draft decision.

73. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**P. Draft decision [CP.12/16]: Marine waste**

74. The representative of the secretariat said that the draft decision, which complemented the one on lagoons, referred to solid waste found in marine and coastal environments.

75. Many participants expressed support for the draft decision, with several drawing attention to laws that had been passed banning the sale and manufacture of plastic bags. Attention was also drawn to the growing problem of microplastics, which were difficult to detect and very harmful to marine life.

76. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**Q. Draft decision [CP.12/17]: Management of coastal cities**

77. The representative of the secretariat, introducing the draft decision, said that it arose from the problems faced by coastal communities when populations were displaced by erosion and flooding. The secretariat had already collaborated with UN-Habitat to assess the feasibility of creating a sustainable planning framework for coastal towns in the Abidjan Conference geographical area.

78. Several participants expressed their support for the draft decision. Some said that the Convention did not have the resources to take major steps to help countries deal with this major challenge, and that Contracting Parties should take appropriate measures to ensure that coastal settlements were managed in accordance with their commitments under the Convention. One participant said that community contingency plans in place to manage risk in coastal cities should be regularly updated. Some participants highlighted the problems posed by migration to cities, which increased pressure on coastal cities and presented waste management and other challenges.

79. The draft decision was approved as amended with text to reflect the issues raised concerning risk management and the domestic responsibilities of Contracting Parties to the Convention.

**R. Draft decision [CP.12/18]: Ocean energy**

80. The representative of the secretariat introduced an information document containing a report on the ocean energy potential of the West Africa region (UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/inf.15). The aim of the initiative was to present the Contracting Parties with options for tapping the energy potential of the oceans in order to diversify their sources of energy.

81. There was general support for the draft decision. One participant noted that the draft decision was aligned with several African initiatives on renewable energy. Implementation of the provisions of the draft decision would be facilitated by partnership with institutions that were supporting renewable energy projects. Another participant said that the initiative was a timely opportunity to diversify the energy mix in Abidjan Convention countries. Yet another said that a considerable range of ocean energy opportunities were available in West Africa, including thermal, tidal, wave and wind energy, and that studies were needed to assess their potential.

82. The draft decision was approved without amendment, and the secretariat was mandated to support feasibility studies on the various technology options available.

**S. Draft decision [CP.12/19]: Alliance of parliamentarians and local elected officials in support of the Abidjan Convention**

83. The representative of the secretariat introduced document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/13, providing information on the establishment of a network of parliamentarians and local elected representatives. The aim of the initiative would be to involve those groups in the development of instruments that would ultimately be considered under their national decision-making processes.

84. A number of participants expressed support for the draft decision, noting the importance of inclusive stakeholder involvement in the management of marine and coastal ecosystems and the crucial role of government in the creation and enforcement of legislation on environmental matters. One participant drew attention to the role played by local government officials as a communications link between parliaments and local populations.

85. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**T. Draft decision [CP.12/20]: Transatlantic cooperation**

86. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat said that the dynamic nature of the oceans, and the interactions between marine currents, required a transoceanic approach to the management of the marine and coastal environment, as was illustrated by the invasion of the West African coast by *Sargassum*, which originated in the western Atlantic. There was no institutional relationship between the north and south, or the east and west, of the Atlantic Ocean; hence the need to consider how to set up an ad hoc framework for environmental cooperation across the Atlantic.

87. Broad support for the draft decision was expressed. One participant said that the initiative was in line with the objectives and work of the commissions on the Guinea and Benguela currents.

88. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**U. Draft decision [CP.12/21]: African forum on oceans**

89. Introducing the draft decision, the representative of the secretariat said that the issue concerned the added value of an information-sharing network between stakeholders and the main actors in the African maritime sector.

90. During the ensuing discussion, one participant said that the Abidjan Convention could play a leading role in the organization of the suggested forum, taking account of similar platforms that had been put in place elsewhere.

91. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

**V. Draft decision [CP.12/22]: Expression of thanks to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire**

92. Introducing the draft decision, the representative of the secretariat said that Côte d'Ivoire had shown commitment by making available the necessary facilities and supporting the secretariat in successfully hosting the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties.

93. Many participants thanked the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for supporting the hosting of the meeting at short notice. Several said that the efforts made had demonstrated the commitment of Côte d'Ivoire to the Convention.

94. The draft decision was approved without amendment.

## **VII. Consideration of the draft Abidjan declaration on integrated ocean management policy in Africa**

95. The representative of the secretariat introduced the draft Abidjan declaration on integrated ocean management policies in Africa, as contained in document UN Environment (Division of Ecosystems)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/6.

96. Subsequently, the meeting decided to establish a contact group, chaired by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, to further discuss the text of the proposed declaration.

97. The draft declaration was approved without amendment.

## **VIII. Consideration of the recommendations from the workshop and the draft report of the expert segment**

98. The recommendations and draft report of the expert segment were submitted to the meeting for its consideration. The recommendations were adopted, without amendment, for submission to the ministerial segment. The draft report was approved, with minor amendments, for inclusion in the report of the meeting.

## **IX. Other matters**

### **A. Proposal for additional draft decision**

99. Several participants said that a draft decision should be drawn up to recognize the work done to revitalize the process of the Abidjan Convention. It was agreed that interested parties would discuss the matter with the secretariat to decide on the way forward.

### **B. Clarification concerning the composition of the Bureau**

100. One participant sought clarification on the composition of the Bureau. The Secretary confirmed that historically the Bureau had been composed of two members from West Africa, two from Central Africa and one from southern Africa. The representative from southern Africa had always been the only Contracting Party in that subregion, namely South Africa, but the accession of Angola and Namibia meant that further consideration needed to be given to the Bureau membership from the southern African subregion. He also confirmed that the next meeting of the Contracting Parties would be held in Central Africa, according to the rotation system.

### **C. Statement by the representative of the Gambia**

101. The representative of the Gambia expressed his country's appreciation to the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire for hosting the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties and expressed the hope that his country, which had originally agreed to host the twelfth meeting, would be in a position to host an upcoming meeting.

## **X. Closure of the expert segment**

102. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the expert segment was declared closed at 4.40 p.m. on Wednesday, 29 March 2017.

## **Part two: Ministerial segment**

### **I. Opening of the ministerial segment**

103. The ministerial segment was opened at 9.45 a.m. on Thursday, 30 March 2017, by the Chair of the meeting, Ms. Edna Molewa, Minister for Environmental Affairs, South Africa.

104. Opening statements were made by Mr. Abou Bamba, Secretary of the Abidjan Convention, UNEP; Ms. Mette Wilkie, Director, Ecosystems Division, UNEP; Nanan Awoula Tanoe Amon, King of N'zima; Ms. Molewa; and Ms. Anne Désirée Ouloto, Minister for Urban Waste Management and Sanitation of Côte d'Ivoire.

105. In his statement, Mr. Bamba emphasized the linkages between oceans and issues relating to culture, food production, economic empowerment and employment, transport, recreational activities and tourism. Given the potential wealth that could be contributed by the coastal zone of the West, Central and southern African region to the total gross domestic product (GDP) of the region, it was time, he said, to link oceans to economic growth and development through the implementation of blue economy principles and within the institutional, diplomatic, technical and legal framework afforded by the Abidjan Convention.

106. Ms. Wilkie, in her statement, said that the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties marked the end of a decade-long revitalization process that had led to an increase in the number of ratifying States, additional protocols and a rise in productive partnerships. Encouraging the Contracting Parties to contribute their efforts and expertise to initiatives aimed at protecting oceans, she highlighted the recent launch by UNEP of the Clean Seas campaign; the adoption of four resolutions on marine issues at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in Nairobi in May 2016; the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 14, on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and the work being done by UNEP to secure commitments from Governments, the private sector and civil society to work towards a pollution-free planet.

107. Nanan Awoula Tanoe Amon, speaking on behalf of the traditional chiefs of Côte d'Ivoire, expressed the hope that the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties would lead to the adoption of decisions aimed at resolving the challenges faced by the inhabitants of coastal areas as a result of climate change. Expressing concern about the decimation of natural resources, high tides and receding coastlines, which all threatened the lives and livelihood of the population, he stressed the need to tackle such threats through optimal coastal management policies. He expressed the hope that the ministers' deliberations would lead to insightful decisions that would enable coastal populations to live without fear of the future.

108. In her remarks, Ms. Molewa reiterated her appreciation to the Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire for supporting the hosting the meeting. The theme of the meeting – “Integrated ocean management policy in Africa” – was appropriate, given the ongoing multisectoral efforts to build on the concept of blue growth and to make sustainable use of marine and coastal resources to promote the socioeconomic well-being of communities. She highlighted the role of the Atlantic Ocean as an artery for trade and gave examples of how South Africa had tapped that potential by developing its coastal infrastructure. She urged parties to support the Antarctic Treaty, citing South Africa's polar research vessel S.A. Agulhas II as an example of how scientific research could help inform policy development for ocean management. She ended by saying that, while the Abidjan Convention had made significant progress, challenges remained, and further national, regional and international efforts were needed to overcome them.

109. Ms. Ouloto, recalling the history of the Convention, welcomed the revitalization process that had seen it grow in scope and effectiveness over the previous decade. With the establishment of the secretariat in Abidjan, assisted by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the meeting at hand had considerable symbolic value. The participation of the King of N'zima in the ministerial segment was a reminder of the multiple threats faced by coastal populations, which could only be addressed by efficient and dynamic cooperation, and by complementarity among relevant organizations at all levels. The high-level consultations offered an opportunity for ministers to articulate views on the management of the oceans, and to demonstrate their commitment to crafting a comprehensive framework of ocean governance that would involve all sectors in harmonized development of marine and coastal resources. She concluded by welcoming all participants and officially declared the meeting open.

## **II. Adoption of the agenda and organizational matters**

110. The provisional agenda (UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/1) was adopted.

### **III. Report of the Executive Director of UNEP on progress made in implementing the decisions adopted at the tenth and eleventh meetings of the Contracting Parties**

111. Under the item, the representative of the secretariat presented the report by the Executive Director of UNEP, as set out in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/3. He highlighted the significant achievement in revitalizing the Convention to the extent that it was viewed as the main forum for marine and coastal management issues across the subregion covered by the Contracting Parties. He stressed that as the Convention entered a new era, full payment of dues by the Contracting Parties would be a significant factor in enabling the Convention to fulfil its mandate.

### **IV. Report of the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Science and Technology**

112. Under the item, the representative of the secretariat presented a report on the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Science and Technology (document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/inf.11).

### **V. Financial matters**

113. In a closed session, the representative of the secretariat presented a report on financial matters, in particular the financial report of the Abidjan Convention Trust Fund for the period 2014–2016, as contained in document UN Environment (Ecosystems Division)/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/5. He said that the Convention had been operating with limited budgetary resources, largely because the contributions of several Contracting Parties were outstanding, as a consequence of which the resources available did not accord with the mandate and activities of the secretariat.

114. Following the presentation, the Secretary submitted invoices for current and outstanding contributions to the representatives of the Contracting Parties attending the meeting. Several representatives stressed the importance to the successful implementation of the Abidjan Convention of ensuring that all contributions were up to date, though some mentioned that ministers of finance did not always understand the critical significance of the work of the Convention. It was agreed that the secretariat would prepare a brief information document on the success and value of the Convention for presentation by the ministers of the environment to the ministers of finance to support the formers' advocacy efforts for timely payment of contributions. It was also agreed that ministers would be provided with information on the contributions of partners and donors, in addition to the data already presented by the secretariat.

115. The Director of the Ecosystems Division of UNEP, speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, underscored the serious financial situation of the Convention and the threat that posed to the sustainability and proper functioning of the secretariat. She congratulated those Contracting Parties that had paid their dues and arrears and encouraged others to follow suit early in 2017 to help mitigate the cash flow problems facing the secretariat. She assured the Contracting Parties that UNEP was committed to the revitalization of the Convention, adding, however, that the Contracting Parties needed to translate their own commitment into tangible financial contributions.

116. The report on financial matters was adopted.

### **VI. Report of the credentials committee**

117. The representative of the credentials committee, presenting the report on credentials, noted that rule 32 of the *Rules of Procedure* stipulated that two thirds of the Contracting Parties constituted a quorum, i.e., representatives of 13 Contracting Parties should present original copies of their credentials. Only 11 of the 19 Contracting Parties had presented original copies of their credentials, while three had submitted copies of their credentials, one of which could not be accepted, because it was not issued by the appropriate authority. The meeting agreed to accept the copies of credentials of the two Contracting Parties, with the proviso that valid originals be presented to the secretariat within two weeks. The meeting took note of the report of the credentials committee and moved forward with a quorum.

## **VII. Review and adoption of decisions**

118. The draft decisions approved by the participants in the expert segment were submitted to the ministers for their consideration. Proposals were made by the ministers to amend draft decisions CP-8, CP-18, CP-19 and CP-21, and the secretariat was mandated to revise the text of those draft decisions for further consideration by the ministers. The secretariat was also requested to finalize the text of a new decision on expressing thanks to the secretariat of the Convention for the work done to revitalize the Convention.

119. The draft decisions, incorporating the requested amendments, were presented to the meeting for adoption. The text of the decisions as adopted by the Contracting Parties is set out in annex II to the present report. It has not been formally edited.

## **VIII. Dates and venue of the thirteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties**

120. Introducing the item, the Secretary said that there were two options for the date of the next meeting of the Contracting Parties, namely 23 to 27 March 2020 and 30 March to 3 April 2020. The meeting agreed to the latter date.

121. Regarding the venue, the Secretary said that, according to the usual system of rotation, the host would be one of the countries of central Africa – Cameroon, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Gabon. As Cameroon was not represented at the meeting, it was decided that the secretariat would write to the four countries setting out the basic criteria for hosting a meeting of the Contracting Parties and would take a decision based on the response. That did not preclude those countries' discussing the matter further among themselves.

## **IX. Finalization and adoption of the Abidjan Declaration**

122. The meeting considered the draft Abidjan Declaration on Integrated Ocean Management Policies in Africa, as set out in document xxx/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/6. Following discussion, the text was adopted on the understanding that the secretariat, working in conjunction with the rapporteur of the meeting, would, after the meeting, incorporate the amendments proposed at the meeting and make any other adjustments required as a result of those amendments. The text as adopted is set out in annex I to the present report. It has not been formally edited.

## **X. Adoption of the report of the meeting**

123. The draft report of the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, as set out in document UNEP/ABC-WACAF/COP.12/L.1, was adopted, on the understanding that it would be finalized by the secretariat, working in conjunction with the rapporteur, after the meeting. The decisions adopted by the Contracting Parties at their twelfth meeting are set out in annex II to the present report. They have not been formally edited.

## **XI. Election of the Bureau**

124. The following members of the Bureau were elected:

Chair: Ms. Anne Désirée Ouloto (Côte d'Ivoire)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Kwabena Frempong Boateng (Ghana)

Ms. Haddijatou Jallow (Sierra Leone)

Rapporteurs: Ms. Rosalie Matondo (Congo)

Mr. Louis Lungu Malutshi (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

Mr. Alphaeus Naruseb (Namibia)

## **XII. Closure of the meeting**

125. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 1.05 p.m. on Friday, 31 March 2017.

## Annex I

### Abidjan Declaration on Integrated Ocean Management Policies in Africa

*We, the participating ministers,*

*Having met* in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on the occasion of the twelfth Conference of 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 Africa Region (Abidjan Convention),

*Recalling* the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework regulating all activities to be carried out in the oceans and seas, and drawing attention more particularly to part XII of the Convention, which relates to the protection of the marine *environment*,

*Recalling* paragraphs 162 and 177 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The future we want", on the importance of creating protected marine areas and the urgent need to take a decision on launching international negotiations on a legal instrument allowing for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas located beyond national jurisdiction,

*Recalling* the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action resulting from the twenty-second Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2016 and relating, inter alia, to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change of December 2015,

*Taking note* of General Assembly resolution 70/1 on "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", whose paragraph 33 refers, inter alia, to the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas,

*Recalling* the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2016,

*Recalling* resolution 2/11 on marine plastic litter and microplastics of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session (May 2016),

*Recalling* the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its twenty-second ordinary session, in January 2015,

*Conscious* of the opportunity offered by the blue-economy approach to create prospects for ecologically sustainable and socially inclusive economic growth,

*Recalling* the 2015 African Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa, particularly its provisions relating to illegal trade in fishery products and other marine species,

*Recalling* the African Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its extraordinary summit in 2016 and aimed at ensuring the development of the blue economy,

*Acknowledging* the enormous economic potential of Africa's Atlantic seaboard and the awareness-building role played by parliamentarians and local counsellors in its socioeconomic development,

*Considering* the five priority areas of the African Development Bank for the next 10 years, namely "Light up and power Africa", "Industrialize Africa", "Integrate Africa", "Feed Africa" and "Improve quality of life for the people of Africa",

*Recalling* the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme of the International Maritime Organization, aimed at helping developing countries to implement international maritime rules and standards for the safety of maritime transport and the protection of the marine environment,

*Noting* the negative impacts of coastal erosion on the socioeconomic viability of the West African coast and the efforts of the World Bank to address this phenomenon,

*Considering* the need to develop a strategy, policies and programmes for the integrated management of coastal cities in the Abidjan Convention zone,

*Decides:*

1. To approve the renewal of the Abidjan Convention work programme for 2015–2017 for the period 2017–2020;
2. To support the process of developing the Convention’s monitoring and evaluation system, and to request the secretariat to present the final version at the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties;
3. To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) to extend the life of the Trust Fund through 31 December 2020;
4. To approve the revision of the 2017 budget of the Trust Fund;
5. To approve the Convention budget for 2017–2020;
6. To authorize the opening of a bank account in Abidjan to facilitate the work of the secretariat and its cooperation with financial partners;
7. To validate the amended Convention and its new protocols, and to request the secretariat to organize, as soon as possible, a meeting of plenipotentiaries for their adoption;
8. To request the secretariat to collaborate with relevant international institutions to develop an integrated coastal and ocean management policy for the Abidjan Convention area, and to organize broad regional consultations to agree on a final version of the policy, to be presented for review and adoption at the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties;
9. To request the secretariat to prepare the draft protocol as soon as possible so as to create the Guinea Current Commission as soon as the necessary financial resources are available;
10. To request the secretariat, in collaboration with the Committee on Science and Technology, to finalize the updating of the action plan, and to request the Contracting Parties to contribute thereto;
11. To urge the secretariat to present the updated version of the Action Plan at the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties;
12. To request the secretariat to work with the States Parties to ensure that issues related to oceans and coastal zones are taken into account in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate change;
13. To support and promote the implementation of the West Africa Coastal Areas Management Programme initiated by the World Bank Group;
14. To request the secretariat to become involved in the implementation of the above-mentioned programme and to undertake discussions with the World Bank Group so as to extend it to the other regions affected by coastal erosion;
15. To request the Contracting Parties to recognize the importance of safeguarding areas beyond national jurisdiction and ensuring their sustainable use under the Convention and in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;
16. To invite governments of the region to strengthen their cooperation with partners and stakeholders on the western shore of the tropical Atlantic Ocean so as to acquire a better understanding of transnational issues linked to invasive species, with a view to jointly developing appropriate solutions;
17. To adopt and implement a regional strategy against invasive species and to invite Governments to develop national action plans, exchange information, and facilitate rapid provision of mutual assistance against invasive marine and coastal species;
18. To encourage Contracting Parties to implement the African Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa, and to encourage partners to support its implementation;
19. To request the secretariat to initiate, as soon as possible, consultations with partners to prepare a study on the state of the environment, including the level of pollution, of lagoon areas and the socioeconomic development opportunities they provide;
20. To request the secretariat and its relevant partners to create a database on marine waste for use as a basis for strategies on marine waste, thus contributing to well-grounded decisions and policies at the municipal, national, sub regional and regional levels;



21. To request the secretariat to develop and implement a regional initiative on urban planning in coastal cities in order to improve the living conditions of coastal populations, and to report on it at the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties;

22. To request the secretariat to undertake a study of the energy potential of marine and coastal ecosystems in the area covered by the Convention, and to organize regional consultations in order to finalize an action plan for producing and distributing clean energy from the aforesaid ecosystems, for presentation, review and adoption at the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties;

23. To support the creation of an alliance of parliamentarians and local elected representatives of Contracting Parties to the Convention, and to request the Convention secretariat, in partnership with relevant international organizations, to develop an action plan aimed at ensuring the effective functioning of the alliance, for presentation, review and adoption at the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties

24. To undertake to set up a platform of exchange and reflection known as the African Forum on Seas and Oceans of the Southeast Atlantic, and to request the Convention secretariat to lead the reflection on this issue and report thereon to the thirteenth Conference of the Contracting Parties;

25. To express their gratitude and thanks to the Government and people of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for their cordial hospitality and their active involvement in the successful organization of the twelfth Conference of the Contracting Parties, with special thanks to the Head of the State, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, for his personal involvement in the success of this event.

## Annex II

### **Decisions adopted by 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 Africa Region**

*Recalling* that 2014 marked the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas, and drawing particular attention to part XII of the Convention, on the protection and preservation of the marine environment,

*Recalling also* paragraphs 158–177 (“Oceans and seas”) and 178–180 (“Small island developing States”) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled “The future we want”, which was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations,

*Recalling further* paragraphs 162 and 177 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development concerning the importance of the establishment of marine protected areas and the urgent need for a decision on the launch of international negotiations on a legal instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction,

*Recalling* the Paris Agreement on climate change adopted at the conclusion of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which stresses the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity,

*Recalling also* the Marrakesh Action Proclamation for Our Climate and Sustainable Development adopted at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2016, which reaffirms specifically the commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted in December 2015,

*Taking note* of General Assembly resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and its paragraph 33 concerning the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas,

*Taking into account* the discussions emerging from the African Ministerial Conference on Ocean Economies and Climate Change held in preparation for the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties, organized jointly by the World Bank and Mauritius,

*Recalling* the commitment of the international community in the framework of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, constituting the 10-year strategic plan adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010, and, in particular, target 11, aimed at achieving the conservation of 10 per cent of marine areas by 2020, and strategic goal B, aimed at reducing the direct pressures on biodiversity and promoting its sustainable use,

*Taking note* of the overall process of the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas through the organization of a series of regional workshops and, in particular, the regional workshop for the South-East Atlantic, held in Swakopmund, Namibia, in April 2013, and the regional capacity-building workshop for West Africa, held in Dakar in February 2013, as part of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative,

*Recalling* the continued active collaboration between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Abidjan Convention on topics such as ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, areas outside national jurisdiction and the attainment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,

*Acknowledging* the fact that the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas must be based on scientific expertise and, where appropriate, on technical information and opinions on marine biological diversity and the implementation of the ecosystem approach and application of the precautionary principle,

*Recalling* the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancun, Mexico, from 4 to 17 December 2016, and in particular its decisions XIII/7, XIII/9, XIII/10 and XIII/12, on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; marine spatial

planning; impacts of marine debris and anthropogenic underwater noise on marine and coastal biodiversity; and ecologically or biologically significant marine areas,

*Recalling also* resolution 2/11 on marine plastic litter and microplastics adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, held in May 2016 in Nairobi,

*Recalling further* the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy, adopted by the African Union on 31 January 2014, the principles of which were to be taken into consideration in the African Union's Agenda 2063,

*Noting* the importance of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, set up under the auspices of the United Nations, and taking note of the workshop in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, from 28 to 30 October 2013, in support of the Regular Process, and encouraging the Contracting Parties to nominate experts to the pool of experts for the Regular Process,

*Aware* of the opportunity which the notion of the green economy represents for the socioeconomic development of African countries, based on the sound use of their coastal and marine natural resources,

*Taking into account* the Abu Dhabi Declaration and the outcome of the Blue Economy Summit, held in Abu Dhabi on 19 and 20 January 2014,

*Aware* of the importance of a blue economy approach to the extent that it could offer prospects for environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic growth throughout the continent,

*Acknowledging* that the General Assembly has reaffirmed its central role in the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction and has noted the work of States and relevant intergovernmental organizations and bodies on those issues, inviting them to contribute, within the areas of their respective competence, to the consideration of those issues within the process initiated by the General Assembly in resolution 66/231;

*Recalling* that, in "The future we want", the Assembly also reaffirmed the undertaking by States to tackle, with urgency, the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including by taking a decision on the development of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,

*Recalling also* decision CP.11/2 approving the Convention's work programme for the period 2015–2017 and noting with satisfaction the level of fulfilment of the tasks performed to date,

*Expressing deep appreciation* to those States that have made efforts to pay their contributions to the trust fund of the Convention since the holding of the tenth Conference of the Parties in Pointe-Noire, Congo,

*Acknowledging* the financial contributions made by the Government of Sweden, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and the United States Agency for International Development, through the West African Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme and the MAVA Foundation, for the implementation of the Abidjan Convention,

*Taking into consideration* the financial rules and financial regulations governing funds within the purview of the United Nations and the areas in which specific financial procedures would apply,

*Concerned* by the continued degradation of coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangrove ecosystems, taking into account the critical functions that they perform in the conservation of marine biodiversity and recognizing the need for partnerships to increase knowledge about these ecosystems,

*Recognizing* the need to assess the performance of the action plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the West and Central African region since its adoption in 1981 and to update the plan,

*Recognizing also* the need to strengthen the mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention at the regional level through the participation of various stakeholders and institutions in the protection of maritime and coastal areas,

*Recognizing further* the need to strengthen South-South cooperation in the area of the protection of the oceans, their resources and marine biodiversity,

*Recalling* the policy handbook on the blue economy in Africa, prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa, including its provisions designed to provide step-by-step assistance to African

member States in more effectively mainstreaming the blue economy in their strategies, policies and national legislation,

*Recalling also* the report of the Economic Commission for Africa entitled “Unlocking the full potential of the blue economy: are African small island developing states ready to embrace the opportunities?”

*Taking note* of the recommendations of the International Conference on the Illegal Exploitation of and Illicit Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, held in Brazzaville on 30 April 2015, aimed in particular at the development of an African common strategy to counter such trade,

*Recalling* the African strategy on combating illegal exploitation of and illicit trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa, adopted in 2015, in particular its provisions concerning the illicit trade in fisheries products and other marine species,

*Recalling also* the Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa, adopted in Lomé in 2016 by African Heads of State, for the development of the blue economy by various means, including the preservation of the marine environment, and maritime safety and security,

*Recognizing* the immense economic potential of the African coastline and the advocacy role played by parliamentarians and local elected officials in the process of the socioeconomic development of the continent’s Atlantic seaboard,

*Recalling* the Integrated Maritime Strategy of the Economic Community of West African States, which sets out a strategic framework for the strengthening of maritime governance, management of the marine environment and maritime safety and security in West Africa,

*Recognizing* in addition the role of the project to support the regional network of parliamentarians and local elected officials for the integrated management of the coastal and marine areas of the countries of the West African seaboard, in relation to the issues of fisheries, hydrocarbons and mangroves,

*Considering* the five priority areas of the African Development Bank for the next ten years, namely: “Light up and power Africa”, “Feed Africa”, “Industrialize Africa”, “Integrate Africa”, and “Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa”,

*Recalling* the annual report of the Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the sixth report in the Global Environment Outlook series, in particular its volume on the 2016 regional assessment for Africa, underlining the key role of nature in development,

*Noting* the importance of the topics explored within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, namely, governance, land-based and marine pollution, biodiversity and ecosystems, land-sea interactions and processes, integrated coastal zone management and sustainable consumption and production,

*Taking note* of the 2016 United Nations World Water report, chapter 6 of which, on Africa, outlines the challenges related to water resources in Africa,

*Considering* the 2016 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: “The state of world fisheries and aquaculture 2016: contributing to food security and nutrition for all”,

*Taking note* of the discussions held in Freetown in the framework of the Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme for West Africa on the extractive industries, illegal, undeclared and unregulated fishing and the management of wetlands, protected areas and the coast,

*Recalling* the report of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on its strategic objective 4 aimed at promoting international scientific cooperation on the major challenges to sustainable development,

*Recalling also* the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme of the International Maritime Organization, which is designed to assist developing countries in implementing international maritime rules and standards for the safety of shipping and protection of the marine environment,

*Aware* of the negative impacts of coastal erosion on the socioeconomic viability of the West African coast, and also of the efforts made by the World Bank to curb this scourge,

*Taking into account* the Dakar Declaration, adopted on 18 May 2011, on the establishment of a West African coastal observatory, with aim of reducing coastal hazards and the impacts of coastal erosion,

*Recalling* the critical importance of lagoons in biological productivity and their role in the development of seaside tourism,

*Recognizing* the need to formulate an urban development strategy for coastal towns and cities and to develop programmes and policies for their integrated management in the Abidjan Convention area,

*Decide:*

### **Decision CP.12/1: Work programme for 2017–2020**

1. To approve the continuation of the 2015–2017 work programme for the period 2017–2020;
2. To agree that the 2017–2020 work programme should continue to assign priority to the same thematic areas as those set out in the 2015–2017 work programme, namely:
  - (a) Valuation of the goods and services provided by ecosystems and coastal and marine habitats;
  - (b) Management for the implementation of programmes and activities aimed at reducing or preventing the degradation of the marine environment and coastal areas;
  - (c) Coordination and legal aspects, including amending and updating the Abidjan Convention, improving the coordination of activities and exchange of information and the strengthening of institutions for the implementation of the Convention;
  - (d) Communication, awareness-raising, information and education, with a focus on the exchange of information with communities and on advocacy, community empowerment and capacity-building;
  - (e) Cross-cutting and emerging issues and financing strategies;
3. To support the process of developing the monitoring and evaluation system of the Abidjan Convention and to request the secretariat to submit the final version to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting;
4. To urge the secretariat to continue to include in the 2017–2020 work programme aspects of collaboration with partnerships working in the area of management of the marine and coastal environment of the Convention area, such as GRID-Arendal, the United States Agency for International Development, through the West African Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme, the MAVA Foundation, the World Bank, the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations-Institute for Advance Sustainability Studies (Potsdam), the Alliance of Parliamentarians and Local Elected Officials for the Protection of the West African Coastline, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Wetlands International, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme for West Africa, the subregional fisheries commissions, the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, BirdLife International, the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the United States Africa Command, Africa Business Network and other relevant organizations;
5. To request the secretariat to develop the 2020–2023 programme of work in line with the priority areas for the implementation of blue growth strategies; implementation of the action plan for the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy on ocean governance, in accordance with the objectives of the Abidjan Convention; development of the partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity with the aim of ensuring the protection of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in accordance with the process launched within the framework of the United Nations;

### **Decision CP. 12/2: Financial matters**

1. To request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to extend the validity of the trust fund of the Abidjan Convention to 31 December 2020;
2. To note that, pursuant to the decision of the Contracting Parties at their tenth meeting, the salary of the Executive Secretary covered by the United Nations Environment Programme from 2010 to 2012 was gradually shifted to the trust fund from 2013, with 70 per cent of the cost covered by the United Nations Environment Programme and 30 per cent by the trust fund, and to note also that, since 2014, the salary of the Executive Secretary of the Convention has been fully covered by the trust fund;

3. To congratulate the States that have made efforts to pay their contributions to the trust fund of the Convention since the tenth meeting of the Contracting Parties, held in Pointe-Noire, Congo, and to recall that the full revitalization of the Convention depends on the available funds and the contributions from Contracting Parties;
4. To recall that the non-payment of contributions and arrears to the trust fund will erode the progress made in the revitalization of the Convention and could undermine its viability;
5. To urge parties to pay their contributions to the trust fund as soon as possible and, for those that have not yet done so, to pay their arrears, in compliance with decision MoP.1/5/2008;
6. To approve the revised 2017 budget of the trust fund, as presented in the background note by the United Nations Environment Programme on the integrated maritime strategy of the Economic Community of West African States;<sup>1</sup>
7. To approve the Convention's budget for 2017–2020 as set out in the above-mentioned document and subsequent amendments made following the meeting of experts at the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties;
8. To approve the rules of management and financial procedures of the Abidjan Convention, which will complement the financial rules and regulations of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme, in order:
  - (a) To provide clear and specific guidelines on administering the trust fund of the Abidjan Convention, updating the fund's terms of reference and consolidating in a single document the financial arrangements specified above, which are currently set out in different documents, making it difficult to gain an overall view of them;
  - (b) To provide clear and precise guidelines for the overall management of the trust fund in support of the Abidjan Convention;
  - (c) To assist the Contracting Parties in understanding the financial rules and regulations applicable to the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme;
  - (d) To make additional arrangements to accommodate the specific nature of the Abidjan Convention;
  - (e) Clearly to define the responsibilities and financial obligations of the United Nations Environment Programme as the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, and also those of the Contracting Parties;
9. To adopt the specific financial rules, regulations and procedures of the United Nations Environment Programme for the operation of the Convention, its protocols, its subsidiary bodies and its secretariat, as set out in annex III to the present decision;
10. To examine these rules and procedures at the thirteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties in 2020 and, if necessary, to amend the procedures pursuant to resolution 2/18 of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats;
11. To express their sincere appreciation to the above-mentioned organizations for their financial contributions to implementation of the Abidjan Convention;
12. To agree on measures to improve the financial viability of the implementation of the Convention, by taking due account of issues relating to coastal and marine areas in national policies, strategies, plans and budgets;
13. To request the secretariat to continue to develop projects, mobilize resources and encourage the submission of in kind contributions in support of implementation of the action plan and the Convention at the national level;
14. To commend the secretariat of the Convention on its efforts to collect arrears and contributions from Contracting Parties which have not yet made their payments;
15. To authorize the opening of a bank account in Abidjan to facilitate the operation of the secretariat and cooperation with financial partners through management arrangements that will be specified by the Contracting Parties;

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<sup>1</sup> ABC-WACAF/COP.12/INF/6.

**Decision CP.12/3: Amendment of the text of the Abidjan Convention**

1. To commend the secretariat on the organization of national and regional consultations on the amendment of the text of the Abidjan Convention;
2. To validate the final version of the amended text, as set out in annex I;
3. To encourage Governments to request the secretariat to convene at the earliest possible juncture a meeting of plenipotentiaries for the adoption and signature of the aforesaid text;

**Decision CP.12/4: Work by the Convention on the interface between freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems**

1. To commend the secretariat on the organization of the national consultations on the additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention concerning integrated coastal zone management;
2. To validate the final version of the protocol;
3. To request the secretariat to continue the process of drawing up the action plan for the implementation of the protocol;
4. To encourage Governments specifically to request the secretariat to convene at the earliest possible juncture a meeting of plenipotentiaries for the adoption and signature of the protocol;

**Decision CP.12/5: Sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems in the Abidjan Convention area**

1. To commend the secretariat on the organization of the national consultations on the additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention concerning the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems;
2. To validate the final version of the protocol on the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems and to request the secretariat to continue the process of drawing up an action plan for the implementation of the protocol;
3. To encourage Governments specifically to request the secretariat to convene at the earliest possible juncture a meeting of plenipotentiaries for the adoption and signature of the protocol concerning the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems;

**Decision CP.12/6: Environmental standards for oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities off the coasts of the Contracting Parties**

1. To commend the secretariat on the organization of the national consultations on the additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on environmental norms and standards related to offshore oil and gas activities;
2. To validate the final version of the protocol on environmental norms and standards related to offshore oil and gas activities and to request the secretariat to continue the process of drawing up an action plan for the implementation of the protocol;
3. To encourage Governments specifically to request the secretariat to convene at the earliest possible juncture a meeting of plenipotentiaries for the adoption and signature of the protocol on environmental norms and standards for offshore oil and gas activities;

**Decision CP.12/7: Integrated coastal and ocean management policy**

1. To request the secretariat to work with international institutions to develop a regional policy for integrated coastal and ocean management in the Abidjan Convention area;
2. To request the secretariat to take into account Sustainable Development Goal 14 on the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources in preparing the regional policy on integrated coastal and ocean management;
3. To request the secretariat, within available resources, to organize extensive regional consultations, with a view to agreeing on a final version of the policy on integrated coastal and ocean management, which will be presented at the thirteenth meeting of the Contracting Parties for their consideration and adoption;

### **Decision CP.12/8: Establishment of the Guinea Current Commission by means of a protocol to the Abidjan Convention**

1. To take note of the progress in the work by the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, on the establishment of the Guinea Current Commission by means of an additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention and the conversion of the strategic action plan into a programmatic approach of the Global Environment Facility for the Guinea Current large marine ecosystem;
2. To urge the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations agencies involved in the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem project to make available financial resources for the development of the protocol to establish the Guinea Current Commission;
3. To request the secretariat, between 2017 and 2020, to prepare the draft additional protocol for the establishment of the Guinea Current Commission;

### **Decision CP.12/9: Revitalization of the action plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of the South-Eastern Atlantic**

1. To take note of the progress made in updating the action plan for the protection and development of the marine environment and coastal areas of West, Central and Southern Africa;
2. To request the secretariat, in collaboration with the Committee on Science and Technology, to finalize the updating of the action plan and to coordinate its revitalization process, in line with the objectives of the Abidjan Convention;
3. To request the Contracting Parties and, in particular, the focal points to contribute to the finalization and updating of the action plan, including by providing technical support or by making appropriate recommendations;
4. To request the United Nations Environment Programme to support the process of revitalizing the action plan and to urge partners working in the area of the management of the marine and coastal environment of the region to play an active part in the assessment and updating of the action plan;
5. To urge the secretariat to submit the final updated version of the action plan to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting;

### **Decision CP.12/10: Coastal erosion in the context of climate change**

1. To recall to the secretariat the need, in compliance with decision CP.9/14, to initiate a programme to operationalize article 10 of the Abidjan Convention on coastal erosion, with the support of relevant organizations;
2. To request the secretariat to work with States to ensure that issues related to oceans and coastal areas are taken into account in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate change;
3. To recall the institutional, political, technical and legal mandate conferred by the Contracting Parties on the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention in the campaign against coastal erosion in West, Central and Southern Africa;
4. To request the secretariat to draw up and implement a joint work programme with the support of international organizations and regional economic integration organization partners;
5. To support and promote implementation of the West African coastal management programme initiated by the World Bank;
6. To request the secretariat to participate in the implementation of the programme and to urge the secretariat to initiate discussions with the World Bank Group to extend the programme to other regions that face problems of coastal erosion;
7. To request the secretariat to encourage national and regional organizations responsible for the development of natural disaster risk reduction strategies to include coastal risks among the priority areas to be tackled at national and regional scales;



8. To request Parties to strengthen their coastal governance policy, to take on board the results of the work on erosion and integrated coastal management and to initiate studies on the issues of ocean acidification and the reduction of risks related to the coast;

### **Decision CP.12/11: Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas**

1. To take note of the need to promote the search for additional follow-up, in accordance with international and domestic law, to enhance the ecological or biological information in areas under the jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention in order to facilitate the future description of marine areas of ecological or biological importance, based on scientific criteria or other relevant criteria;

2. To invite the Convention on Biological Diversity, Governments and other partner agencies and institutions to provide the secretariat with the financial and human resources necessary to strengthen the capacity of countries to achieve their regional priorities under Aichi Biodiversity Targets 6 and 11, in particular small island developing States, through the organization of regional or subregional workshops on capacity-building for the identification of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas;

3. To link the work on marine areas of ecological or biological importance with initiatives on marine spatial planning and assessment of the marine environment in the context of large marine ecosystems, with a view to developing an integrated ocean management policy;

### **Decision CP.12/12: Conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction**

1. To request the Contracting Parties to recognize the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction in the context of the Abidjan Convention and in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

2. To urge the Contracting Parties to strengthen research capacities and marine scientific decision-making at the national and subregional levels in relation to the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;

3. To urge the Contracting Parties to participate in and contribute to the process under way within the framework of the United Nations and, in particular, the work of the ad hoc open-ended informal working group to study issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;

### **Decision CP.12/13: Combating marine and coastal invasive species**

1. To call on the Governments of the region to support research and observation activities relating to marine and coastal invasive species in order to improve understanding of these phenomena and to determine their causes, with a view to developing specific forecasting models, setting up effective warning systems and developing solutions adapted to local contexts;

2. To call on the Governments of the region to build up their cooperation with partners and stakeholders on the western seaboard of the tropical Atlantic Ocean in order to gain a better understanding of the transnational problems posed by, for example, invasions of sargasso seaweed, with the aim of jointly developing appropriate solutions;

3. To adopt the regional strategy to combat invasive plants set out in the regional strategy for the management of the coastal and marine alien and invasive species of West Africa<sup>2</sup> and to commit themselves to its prompt implementation;

4. To call on the Governments of the region to draw up national action plans to combat marine and coastal invasive species;

5. To urge States to cooperate with one another in sharing information on combating marine and coastal invasive species and to facilitate the prompt provision of assistance, such as a rapid regional response in exchanging information on sargasso invasions;

<sup>2</sup> UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.12/11.

### **Decision CP.12/14: Illegal trade, illicit trafficking, consumption and other uses of protected, endangered and/or vulnerable marine and coastal fauna and flora**

1. To encourage Contracting Parties to implement the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation of and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa;
2. To encourage partners to support an assessment of the capture for commercial purposes of aquatic mammals, reptiles and amphibians and to collect data on the origins of the meat used for consumption, on the traditional nature of the captures and consumption and the extent of the domestic and external trade, in order to supplement the data available from assessments of the sale of bushmeat;
3. To call upon partners to explore the possibility of reducing the fisheries-related accidental and intentional deaths of marine species, including through the adoption of bycatch-reducing technologies and practices such as turtle-exclusion devices and abandoning the use of threatened or protected species as bait in fishing;
4. To request the secretariat, in partnership with relevant institutions, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the West African Biodiversity and Climate Change Programme, OceanCare and Born Free, to develop a plan of action to combat illegal trade, illicit trafficking, consumption and other uses of protected, endangered and/or vulnerable marine and coastal fauna and flora;
5. To urge the secretariat to prepare a report on those consultations and to make appropriate recommendations, including a costed biennial workplan using a results-based approach, for consideration at the next meeting of the Contracting Parties;
6. To request the secretariat, within available resources, to organize broad regional consultations in order to agree on a final version of the action plan to combat illegal trade, illicit trafficking, consumption and other uses of protected, endangered and/or vulnerable marine and coastal fauna and flora, for submission to the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention for consideration and adoption at their thirteenth meeting;

### **Decision CP.12/15: Sustainable management of lagoons**

1. To recall that article 1 of the Convention, on its geographical scope, includes not only the marine environment and coastal areas, but also inland waters falling within the jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties;
2. To request the secretariat to initiate consultations with partners as soon as possible to prepare a baseline study on the state of the environment and the pollution level of lagoon areas, and also on the socioeconomic development opportunities provided by this ecosystem;
3. To request the secretariat to develop an action plan for the protocol on land-based sources and activities that could cause marine and coastal pollution and to forge close cooperation links with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, with the aim of creating synergies in the implementation of the protocol on land-based sources and activities and of the present decision;

### **Decision CP.12/16: Marine waste**

1. To collect reliable data and information on marine waste to assist the African Marine Waste Network in developing a database accessible to all and in conducting analyses to establish a reference framework that would inform specific management and information programmes, to monitor progress and provide a model for the future in the area of marine waste;
2. To use the database thus developed and the resulting analyses to carry out, in collaboration with the African Marine Waste Network and other relevant institutions, a joint assessment of the current state of waste generation in Africa, the state of the marine environment in the Abidjan Convention area, the economic and social pressures exerted on the system, and the effectiveness of measures taken to mitigate their effects;
3. To request the secretariat and its relevant partners to establish a database on marine waste as a basis for strategies developed in the region on marine waste, thus contributing to well-founded decisions and policies at municipal, national, subregional and regional levels;

4. To request the secretariat and partners to develop a programme, targeted at relevant agencies and organizations of the region, to raise awareness of the harmful effects of marine waste and the importance of confronting this problem;

### **Decision CP.12/17: Management of coastal cities**

1. To take note of the discussions in progress between the secretariat of the Convention, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the World Bank and other partners on the issue of the urban planning of coastal cities;
2. To request the secretariat to develop and implement a regional initiative in this regard to improve the living conditions of coastal communities and to report thereon to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting;

### **Decision CP.12/18: Ocean energy**

1. To take note of the energy deficit of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, which is a major impediment to their socioeconomic development;
2. To request the secretariat to undertake a comprehensive study of the economic potential of oceans, with particular emphasis on the energy potential associated with coastal and marine ecosystems in the Abidjan Convention area;
3. To request the secretariat, within available resources, to organize regional consultations in order to agree on a final version of the action plan for the production and distribution of clean energy from marine and coastal ecosystems, which will be submitted to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting, for their consideration and adoption;

### **Decision CP.12/19: Alliance of parliamentarians and local elected officials in support of the Abidjan Convention**

1. To invite the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to support the national consultation process for the establishment of an alliance of parliamentarians and local elected officials in support of the Abidjan Convention;
2. To request the secretariat, in partnership with international organizations dedicated to the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources, to support the preparation of strategic documents for the creation of the alliance of parliamentarians, to be submitted to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting for their consideration and adoption;

### **Decision CP.12/20: Transatlantic cooperation**

1. To request the secretariat to undertake consultations to explore ways and means of setting up an ad hoc framework for environmental cooperation bringing together the regions that share the Atlantic Ocean;
2. To report to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting on the outcome of those consultations;

### **Decision CP. 12/21: African forum on oceans**

1. To invite the Contracting Parties to observe African Oceans Day on 25 July of each year;
2. To commit themselves to setting up a platform for exchange and discussion, to be called the African Forum on the Seas and Oceans of the South-Eastern Atlantic;
3. To request the secretariat to lead the discussions on this issue, with the involvement of the key stakeholders in the debate on the oceans relevant to the continent, and to report on the matter to the Contracting Parties at their thirteenth meeting.

### **Decision CP.12/22: Expression of thanks to the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention**

1. To conclude the process of revitalizing the Abidjan Convention and to launch its active phase;
2. To express heartfelt congratulations and sincere thanks to the Executive Secretary of the Abidjan Convention and the entire secretariat team for the quality of the work accomplished in connection with the revitalization process;

**Decision CP.12/23: Expression of thanks to the host country**

1. To express their sincere thanks to His Majesty Nanan Désiré Tanoé, King of the N'zima, for honouring with his presence the official opening ceremony of the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties;

2. To express their gratitude and appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for their warm hospitality and their active involvement in the successful organization of this, the twelfth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention. A special motion is addressed to Alassane Ouattara, the Head of State, for his personal commitment to the success of the event.

## List of sponsored participants

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