



United Nations  
Environment Programme

Distr.: Restricted

25 juin 2019

Original: English

---

**Plenipotentiaries 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 African Region (Abidjan  
Convention)**

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 2 to 4 July 2019

**Abidjan Convention Partners' Meeting**

**Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2019**

## I. Context

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 (also called the Abidjan Convention) covers an area from Mauritania to South Africa.

The coastal countries in this area contain highly productive and diverse ecosystems supporting fisheries, coastal tourism, industries, busy ports and oil extraction. However, the region has been undergoing rapid modernization leading to the unsustainable use of natural resources and extensive pollution. As a result, crucial habitats are disappearing.

In order to halt this trend and confront the complexity of the environmental problems in an integrated way, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council adopted a regional approach to managing marine and coastal issues. Subsequently, the Regional Seas Programme for the West, Central and Southern African region, also called the Abidjan Convention, came into force on 5 August 1984. It applies to the marine and coastal environment, and related inland waters falling within the jurisdiction of the contracting States of the West, Central and Southern African region. The coastline of this area from Mauritania to South Africa exceeds 14,000 km, spanning 22 countries and marked by the Canary, Guinea and Benguela large marine ecosystems (LMEs). These coastal ecosystems include deltas, mangroves, sea grass, meadows, wetlands, barriers and lagoons.

From a socio-economic perspective, the Convention covers the richest and most populated geographical area of the African continent with a GDP of \$ 1.112 billion for which the most important resources include fisheries, diamonds, oil and gas and other minerals like limestone and sand. Tourism is also growing in importance.

Acknowledging the uniqueness of the coastal and marine environment of the region, as well as its economic and technical limitations, the countries have recognized the need for a regional approach to meeting transboundary marine environmental challenges.

In this context, the Abidjan Convention provides an overarching legal and collaborative framework for all marine-related programmes in West, Central and Southern Africa. The activities include:

- Elaborate and implement policies, programs and projects addressing cross-border issues
- Support the establishment of an intergovernmental collaboration forum
- Capacity building of maritime and coastal issues experts in the Convention area
- Mobilize financial resources and promote initiatives related to maritime and coastal issues in the region
- Encourage member states to cooperate in the fight against pollution in case of emergency or in scientific and technical fields.

## II. Justifications

As part of a comprehensive and ambitious exercise to ensure proper implementation of its Mandate and Decisions taken by its Member States during the Conferences of the Parties, the Convention structures its activities around a biennial work programme as well as through the development and implementation of additional regional cooperation instruments including:

- Protocol on pollution from land-based sources and activities
- Protocol on integrated coastal zone management
- Protocol on environmental standards and guidelines for offshore oil and gas activities
- Protocol on sustainable mangrove management
- Policy on integrated management of oceans in the Abidjan Convention zone

Over the past 6 years, the Convention accelerated the process of developing these regional cooperation instruments which shall be signed during the upcoming Plenipotentiaries meeting taking place in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 2 July 2019. In parallel, the Abidjan Convention initiated the development of Action Plans for each Protocol to define a post-signature roadmap for the implementation of the additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention. The Action Plans present a comprehensive list of activities to be implemented both at regional and national levels to ensure the proper operationalization of the Protocols. To ensure integration of all national concerns and priorities and harmonization with various national plans and strategies, the Convention is now planning a series of National Consultations. These consultations will be conducted independently in all the 22 Member States of the Convention through a series of participatory workshops in which governments, national authorities, national experts, researchers, NGOs and civil-society representatives will be invited.

The Convention's Work Programme focuses on the following four themes: 1. assessment; 2. management of coastal and marine ecosystems; 3. coordination and legal aspects; and 4. information and awareness. The four themes are linked and designed to provide a cohesive and integrated holistic programme. In particular, the assessment theme is closely linked to the management theme. The activities under management, coordination and legal aspects and crosscutting issues were successfully implemented through partnerships, as there was good collaboration between the Secretariat and other UN organizations IGO, NGOs and national institutions.

To ensure proper and coordinated implementation of the above-mentioned instruments and projects, the Convention established partnerships with various financial and technical partners supporting specific activities. The Convention will capitalize on the Plenipotentiaries Meeting to convene all its partners in order to present and discuss ongoing and upcoming activities and promote a collaborative approach amongst its partners towards an effective and coordinated implementation of its Mandate and Work Plan.

### **III. Objectives of the meeting**

This Partners Meeting will be held right after the meeting of the Plenipotentiaries and will provide a unique opportunity to gather all the technical and financial partners of the Convention. The meeting intends to review the planned activities of the Convention to discuss collaboration and foster synergies amongst the Convention's partners on supporting activities planning and implementation.

The specific objectives of the meeting will be to:

1. Provide an opportunity for the technical and financial partners of the Abidjan Convention to know and understand the contributions of the other partners both technically and financially
2. Present and facilitate debriefing of program and project supported activities to better understand and coordinate actions within the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention and partners
3. Identify and foster synergies to maximize the use of resources and increase impact of investments
4. Share experiences learnt from existing project supported activities
5. Develop a map of what the various partners and stakeholders are contributing to the Convention and develop a road map for ongoing collaboration

#### **Intended Outputs:**

1. Roles and responsibilities of partners to the Abidjan Convention mapped and synergies and joint opportunities identified
2. A roadmap defined for regular communication and coordination.

#### **Expected Outcomes:**

1. Project Portfolio presented, reviewed, discussed and evaluated and gaps and opportunities for collaboration identified
2. Partners' overlapping areas of intervention mapped-out for collaboration
3. Modalities for implementing cost-sharing on joint project activities established

#### **IV. Tentative Agenda**

9:00 - 9:30 - Registration and opening ceremony (Abou Bamba)

9:30 - 10:00 - Presentation of the Convention Secretariat's Work Plan (Richard Dacosta)

10:00 - 10:30 - Presentation of Protocol Action Plans (Kenan Mogultay)

10:30 – 11:00 - Coffee break

11:00 - 12:00 – Open discussions

12:00 - 13:00 - Working session on synergies identifications

**13:00 - 14:00 - Lunch break**

14:00 - 14:30 - Working session on synergies identifications (continued)

14:30 - 15:30 - Restitution session with the Focal Points

15:30 – 16:00 - Coffee break

16:00 – 16:30 - Next steps

16:30 - 17:00 - Closing of the meeting