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

Abidjan Convention COP decisions (March 2014)

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Introduction

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

Part 1. Expert Segment

Introduction

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

I. Opening of the expert segment

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

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

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

5. Organizational Matters

A. Election of Officers

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

B. Admission of Observers

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

C. Appointment of Credentials Committee

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

D. Adoption of the rules of procedure of the meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

B. Presentations by Other Partners

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. Consideration of draft decisions

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

E. Recommendations of the expert segment

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

F. Closure of the expert segment

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

Part 2: Ministerial Segment

I. Opening of the ministerial segment

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

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

II. Organizational matters

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

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

B. Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

30. The Coordinator of the Convention Secretariat presented the report of the Executive Director of UNEP, which was accepted.

31. The delegation from Liberia drew attention to a decision urging Parties to pay their contributions to the Special Trust Fund as soon as possible, and, for those which have not yet done so, to pay their arrears of contributions in accordance with the MoP.1/5/2008 decision. It was felt that for effectiveness, there was a need for compliance by all parties after agreements were reached at the COP. Recognizing that parties cannot be compelled to make contributions, the question of whether payment of financial commitments to the Abidjan Convention could be tied to access to donor funds was raised.
32. The Chair drew the attention of the delegates to the issues raised and urged Parties to comply with relevant decisions. It was recognized that Contracting Parties must fulfill their financial obligations to the Secretariat in order for it to function, recognizing that UNEP was not in a position to fully fund the work of the Secretariat. A suggestion was made to include this point in the Decisions of COP10.
33. The Minister from South Africa expressed gratitude to the Republic of the Congo for hosting the Conference and for the hospitality extended to delegates. The Minister also welcomed the report of the Executive Director of UNEP, particularly strides by UNEP and the government of Cote d'Ivoire to support the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to promote the activities of the Convention. The Minister further noted that sustainability of the Abidjan Convention depends primarily on financial contributions of the Conference of Parties, who must collectively commit to sustain the Trust Fund, no matter how small their contributions might be.

C. Message of Good Will

34. Following the discussion on the report of the Executive Director of UNEP, Dr. David Johnson intervened on behalf of the OSPAR Convention. He conveyed a Goodwill message to COP10 from the Chairman and members of OSPAR. Recognizing that both Conventions face similar challenges and opportunities, he urged development of an MoU between both Conventions. He thanked the Regional Coordinator of the Abidjan Convention and colleagues at UNEP, Nairobi for taking the initiative forward. He also promised to supply the Abidjan Convention with copies, both in French and English of the OSPAR Convention annual report. Finally he noted that together we can make a difference and wished the Parties good luck as it was his last official event as Executive Secretary of OSPAR.

D. Consideration of draft decisions

35. The Coordinator explained the draft decisions that were before the ministerial segment at the current meeting, as agreed during the meeting of experts. The draft decisions are included as Annex 1 to this report. They have not been formally edited.
36. With regard to decision CP.10/1 (2013-2015 Programme of Work) and following the presentation of the programme, the decision was adopted.
37. Draft decision CP.10/2. (Financial matters) was adopted without amendment.
38. Draft decision CP.10/3 (Transformation of the Regional Coordination Unit into an Executive Secretariat) was adopted.

39. Draft decision CP.10/4 (Abidjan Convention National Implementation Committees) was adopted without amendment.
40. Draft decisions CP.10/5 to CP.10/12 were also all adopted without amendment.
41. Draft decision CP.10/13 (The work of the Convention with regards to the interface between the freshwater courses and marine and coastal ecosystems) was adopted, with the inclusion of “Congo River Basin” among the river basin organizations listed under sub-paragraph 3.
42. Draft decisions CP.10/14 to CP.10/16: were all adopted without amendment.
43. A new decision (CP.10/17) related to imposition of a Green Tax was proposed by the delegation from the Republic of Congo. This proposal generated much debate, and objections were raised by the delegations from Gambia and Nigeria, who felt that, given the reliance on extractive industries, wider consultation was needed. Nigeria also expressed concerns about already existing resource taxes and proposed taking the issue of a Green Tax to the African Union for consideration. It was also felt, by other delegations, including the Republic of the Congo that such a proposal would have been better made in the meeting of experts, to allow for more extensive debate on the merits of such a decision. A suggestion to resubmit to the Abidjan Convention Secretariat at a later date was made.
44. The delegate from the Republic of the Congo, while recognizing the need for funds to operate the Abidjan Convention Secretariat noted the need for innovative and independent financing for the Abidjan Convention, especially since none of the 17 decisions were related to financing - the theme of the conference. He further stressed the need for predictable sources of financing, bearing in mind the economic realities of the traditional donors. To that end he proposed an additional decision, which was debated in plenary.
45. The delegation from Benin raised the issue of piracy and poaching, and requested the Secretariat to consult with parties on these issues within the Abidjan Convention. He also recommended considering preparation of a draft integrated maritime strategy for the Convention area by 2015.
46. Draft decision CP.10/17 was finally adopted.

E. Consideration of draft recommendations

47. A series of 9 recommendations prepared during the experts segment was presented to the Ministerial Segment and was approved without amendment.

F. Report of the Credentials Committee

48. In presenting their report, the Committee informed the meeting that out of the 22 countries invited, 21 attended the meeting. Out of that, 16 were Contracting Parties and out of the 16, 11 had duly submitted their credentials.

G. Dates and Venue for the 11th Ordinary Meeting of Contracting Parties

49. For the purpose of equity, Cameroon recalled that there was a rotation principle between the sub-regions for organization of the Abidjan Convention COPs and he suggested that the next meeting of Contracting Parties take place in Southern Africa. He then proposed that South Africa host the 11th COP and South Africa

accepted. That proposal was adopted and proposed to hold the 11th COP in March 2014. The exact dates of the meeting would be communicated at a later time.

H. Election of the Bureau for the following meeting of the Contracting Parties

50. The Contracting Parties selected the following countries for the Bureau:

Chair: Congo
Vice-Chairs: South Africa and Benin
Rapporteurs: Cameroon and the Gambia

I. Other Matters

51. GRID-Arendal hosted a side event on areas beyond national jurisdiction during the lunch break of the first day of the ministerial meeting. This was followed by a side event by the University of Bouake on the need to delineate maritime boundaries in Africa.

52. The UEMOA Commission and IUCN hosted a side even on coastal erosion. Following on the progresses made for the implementation of decision 9/14 concerning article 10 on coastal erosion, for which 11 countries realized a diagnostic got prepared for the setting up of a regional observatory with the support of UEMOA and IUCN, the countries of Central and Austral Africa are encouraged to launch similar actions in order to develop a comprehensive and regional coastal disasters risks reduction plan.

1.

J. Adoption of Decisions and Report of the 10th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

53. The draft report, including decisions, of the 10th Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, as set out in document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/12 was adopted, on the understanding that it would be finalized by the Secretariat working in conjunction with the rapporteur, after the meeting.

K. Closure of the meeting

54. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 06.30 pm on Friday, 16 November 2012.

Annex I

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Being deeply grateful to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for the provision and equipment of an operating headquarter for the Abidjan Convention Secretariat.

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

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

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

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

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

Hereby decide:

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

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

Commission, the Convention on migratory species (CMS), Wetlands International, Birdlife International and other relevant organizations.

3. *To urge* the Secretariat to include in the 2012-2015 work programme elements that will lead to the implementation of the: i) green economy principles, ii) marine and coastal related Rio+20 decisions, iii) AMCEN 14th meeting decisions on the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions, iv) Africa Union 2050 Integrated Marine Strategy and, v) UNDP South-South Cooperation program.
4. *To further urge* the Secretariat to develop a proper communication plan that will help in raising the public awareness on both the Convention and marine and coastal environmental issues in the region.

Decision CP. 10/2. Financial matters

1. *To agree* to extend the Trust Fund for the region of the West African seas until the Parties otherwise agree.
2. *To reiterate* that the full revitalization of the Convention will depend on available funds and contributions made by the Contracting Parties;
3. *To urge* Parties to pay their contributions to the Special Trust Fund as soon as possible, and, for those which have not yet done so, to pay their arrears of contributions in accordance with the MoP.1/5/2008 decision;
4. *To approve* the 2013-2015 Convention budget, as submitted in the document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/6 ;
5. *To welcome* the financial contributions from the International Swedish development agency (SIDA), from the Ministry of Environment of the Kingdom of Norway, the Ministry of Environment and from Côte d'Ivoire sustainable development in support of the implementation of the Action Plan and the Abidjan Convention;
6. *To recognize* the financial contribution of the Global Environment Fund , in support of the implementation of the Action Plan and the Abidjan Convention;
7. *To express* their sincere thanks to the aforementioned organizations for their financial contributions to the implementation of the Abidjan Convention.
8. *To agree* on the improvement of the financial viability of the implementation of the Convention taking into account issues relating to coastal and marine areas in the policies, strategies, plans and national budgets;
9. *To request* the Secretariat to help develop projects and mobilize resources as well as to encourage contributions in kind to support the implementation of the Action Plan and the Convention at the national level.
10. *To congratulate* the Convention Bureau for its efforts towards the payment of arrears and contributions from Parties that have not yet done so.

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

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

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

1. *To recall* article 4, paragraph 3, of the Convention texts which States that: "at the national level, Contracting Parties adopt laws and regulations guaranteeing the

fulfillment of the obligations under this Convention and shall endeavor to harmonize their policies in this area.

2. *To encourage* Contracting Parties to establish national committees, according to the needs of each party, to serve as a framework for dialogue and action for the implementation of the Convention at the national level;
3. *To urge* that, when such a Committee was established, governmental, non-governmental organizations and/or interested parties with the opportunity to contribute;
4. *To request that* the Secretariat prepares standard terms of reference for the national committees that will be adapted according to the realities of the Parties;
5. *To ask* the national committees to inform the Secretariat of their creation and their terms of reference.

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

1. *To apply mutatis mutandis* to the Organization of meetings of the Convention Bureau elected during the Conference of the Parties, the rules of procedure of the meetings and conferences of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention.
2. *To adopt* the terms of reference of the COP Bureau such as presented in the document UNEP(DEPI)/WACAF/COP.10/11

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

1. *To note* the progress made in the preparation of proposals for amendments to the text of the Abidjan Convention, as presented by the Secretariat in this meeting;
2. *To request* the Secretariat to circulate to the Contracting Parties a final draft of the proposals;
3. *To commit* to undertake at the national level the necessary internal consultations regarding the proposals, according to the applicable legislation in each Contracting Party;
4. *To request* the Secretariat to initiate extended regional consultations, first electronically, and then to organize a meeting of technical and legal experts to discuss the proposed amendments and agree on a final version to be presented for consideration by the Contracting Parties;
5. *To invite* the institutions and/or programmes of the Large Marine Ecosystems in the Abidjan Convention area, and other relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, to support this process.

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

1. *To urge* Contracting Parties to capitalize and replicate on their territory, where possible and relevant, the best decisions and existing best practices, including the regional Charter on the conservation and sustainable use of mangrove forests by PRCM, so as to reduce the rate of degradation of the mangroves along the Atlantic coast of Africa.
2. *To urge* Contracting Parties to consider the importance of the preservation of mangroves; to incorporate it as a goal in forest policy, fisheries management, town planning, environmental, land use planning as well as in natural disaster reduction strategies; and to take legislative and administrative measures relevant for this purpose.
3. *To request* the Secretariat, in collaboration with the partners involved in the sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems such as Wetlands International, IUCN, WWF, Birdlife International, PRCM, FIBA, etc. to propose to the Conference of the Parties a plan of action in order to develop a Protocol on the sustainable management of mangroves on the African Atlantic façade which, must include provisions for enforcement and compliance.

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

1. *To urge* the Contracting Parties to implement the following measures :
 - a) Under the Abidjan Convention, to exchange information, experiences and expertise in the field of security and maritime safety standards that not only take into account environmental and oceanographic features of the three large water currents (Gulf of Guinea, Canary and Benguela) but also universally recommended practices and procedures for the matter,
 - b) Implement initiatives involving the relevant international organizations, such as IMO, UNEP, regional and sub-regional organizations and the extractive industries to develop regional environmental standards to follow when the exploration and exploitation of mining and minerals activities companies off the coasts of the States Parties.
2. *To request* the Secretariat to support, to the extent of available resources, the above mentioned process.

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

1. *To recall* Decision CP.9/1 (4) requesting the secretariat to establish a partnership with PENAf (Ports Environmental Network-Africa) in reducing environmental impacts from ports and shipping in the Abidjan Convention region.
2. *To collaborate* with PENAf in building environmental cooperation among the region's ports on issues concerning environmental impacts from ports and shipping activities for the purpose of protecting the marine and coastal environment, by:

- building capacity of the ports to promote environmental management and performance through education and awareness raising as well as research.
- promoting ports environmental best practice and information exchange and eco-initiatives.

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

1. *To recall* Decision CP 8/5 to encourage Contracting Parties actively to engage in the process of defining the outer limits of their countries' continental shelf, as specified under article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and request the Secretariats of the large marine ecosystem commissions within the Convention area to support the member countries in making submissions for the delineation.
2. *To establish*, under the auspices of the African Union, a working group composed of high-level experts in charge of conducting studies on the delimitation of maritime borders between the Contracting Parties of the Abidjan Convention and make recommendations to COP 11 in this regard.

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

1. *To take note* of sending of the invitation to tender as well as selection criteria for the accommodation of the emergency coordination center for marine pollution in the Abidjan Convention zone to all Contracting Parties
2. *To note* that some bids received from States Parties are incomplete and do not correspond to the instructions such as indicated in the tender.
3. *To note* in addition that the licensing process cannot be done on the basis of such presented offers and therefore to urge other States Parties to submit to the Convention Office offers to host the centre within the six months following the COP10 so that COP11 may complete the attribution process for the accommodation of the headquarters of the emergency coordination Centre for marine pollution
4. To request IMO, UNEP and other relevant partners, to provide assistance to the Contracting Parties desiring to submit a proposal in that sense.

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

1. *To recognize* the need for concerted efforts to improve awareness and the facilitation of dialogue between all stakeholders on the role played by marine and coastal ecosystems by providing key services for the maintenance of the ecological balance, recreation and sustainable tourism.

2. *To request* the Secretariat to contact the World Tourism Organization and other relevant organizations in the sector of sustainable tourism based on marine and coastal ecosystems to develop a document framework for strategic development of the sustainable tourism based on marine and coastal ecosystems for the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention

3. *To ask* State Parties who have experience in the field of sustainable tourism based on marine and coastal ecosystems to contribute to the development of these initiatives; by sharing this experience and best practices with other State Parties to the Convention that are less advanced in this field.

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

1. *To remind* that in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of the COP8/4 decision, it was decided i) to support the use of the ecosystem approach to management as a tool to preserve marine and coastal zones by including the involvement of the upstream countries and ii) to establish a link, in terms of management, between the rivers' basins, estuaries and coastal waters to ensure their sustainable management under the Abidjan Convention,

2. *To furthermore remind* that human activity (agricultural , industrial, urban refuse) conducted in those large basins not only contribute to the transport of nutrients and water towards the marine environment, but are also diverse and diffuse sources of pollution of the marine environment,

3. *To request* the Secretariat to undertake consultations and work on this issue under the Convention in Abidjan and in close cooperation with the basins' authorities such as the Authority of the Niger basin, the Gambia River Development Organization, the Senegal River Development Organization, the Volta River's basin Authority, the Congo Oubangui Sanga International Commission, etc. to ensure integrated management of these basins coasts and adjacent marine waters.

4. *To urge* the States Parties to the Abidjan Convention to promote the integrated management of basins, coastal and maritime areas in accordance with the rules and principles established by the international and regional conventions, including the Abidjan Convention, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Use of International Watercourses and the Convention on the protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area.

5. *To request* the Secretariat take into account conventions in force in the field, to develop an action plan for the possible development of an additional protocol to the Abidjan Convention on integrated management of coastal and marine areas like the Nairobi Convention.

6. *To encourage* the Abidjan Convention to establish close partnership links with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (UNEP/GPA) for an action synergy geared towards the sustainable management of marine and coastal areas

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

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

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

1. *To give* a priority role to the Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) to work together with the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, in the elaboration and implementation of sustainable fisheries management policies, programmes and projects;
2. *To strengthen* coordination and cooperation with the RFBs whose competence areas overlap with or are adjacent to that of the Abidjan Convention to achieve common goals in relation to ecosystems supporting sustainable use of natural resources, by:
 - participating in the meetings of RFBs and facilitating participation of RFBs in relevant meetings of the Abidjan Convention;
 - exploring fields of cooperation (e.g. environmental policies and legislation; ecosystem approach; data collection and information sharing and exchange; capacity building; marine protected areas; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing etc.);
 - Concluding MoUs with the different RFBs.

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

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

with regards to reports on the implementation of the Convention at the level of the States Parties.

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

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

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

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

Annex II

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Convention, Pointe Noire, Republic of the Congo,
12-16 November

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