



AFRICA TO UNOC-3 MESSAGES

Key messages from the African consultation in preparation for the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3)

09th October 2024, Tangier, Kingdom of Morocco

Africa stands at the crossroads of challenges and opportunities when it comes to ocean governance. As a continent heavily reliant on its coastal and marine resources, it faces the dual pressures of climate change and unsustainable exploitation. Our oceans and Aquatic inland ecosystems offer immense potential for sustainable development, but they require urgent, collective action to protect their health and secure the future of oceans, water bodies and communities of United Nations African Member States.

The following key messages were developed by the United Nations African Member States during the consultation for the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) held in Tangier, Kingdom of Morocco, on 09th October 2024 to be conveyed at the upcoming Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) in Nice, France, in June 2025.

Key messages

1. Africa recognizes that its oceans and aquatic inland ecosystems are subjected to numerous stresses, particularly due to resource overexploitation, inadequate or insufficient regulation or governance, strong demand for development, rapid increases in coastal population, habitat degradation, and growing pollution. Addressing these challenges is vital for the health of marine ecosystems and the well-being of coastal and inland communities in Africa.

2. Africa emphasizes the need for integrated and inclusive governance frameworks that promote sustainable management of ocean resources. Collaborative efforts among United Nations African Member States, sub-regional, regional and continental organizations, and international partners are vital for effective governance.
3. There is a pressing need for enhanced scientific research, data collection, and data sharing along African coasts. This is particularly necessary within Africa's Large Marine Ecosystems. Collaborative research initiatives, along with the sharing of knowledge and best practices, will enable informed decision-making and policy development for sustainable development.
4. Effective governance and management of oceans and their resources, as well as the development of a sustainable economy, are inseparable from research. This research must be led by African experts who understand their local environments and the physical, biological, and socio-economic adapted to their regions. Investing in marine research is not just essential; it is a critical driver of economic development for United Nations African Member States.
5. Africa advocates for the sustainable development of the blue economy as a pathway to economic growth, job creation, food and nutrition security and human well-being. Investment in sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and eco-tourism, among others, can provide significant benefits for coastal communities.
6. The youth and the women of Africa are key stakeholders in blue economy development and ocean conservation. We urge increased opportunities for youth and women's engagement in policy design and decision-making processes, capacity building, and innovation in marine sciences and conservation efforts.
7. Recognizing the cultural significance of oceans to African communities is essential. Local knowledge and practices should be integrated into marine management strategies, ensuring that communities are active participants in conservation efforts.
8. Marine protected areas are a valuable tool for co-managing fisheries in Africa, helping to balance conservation with sustainable Ocean resource use. Protecting marine biodiversity is essential for maintaining ecological balance and supporting the livelihoods of millions of Africans. We call for stronger commitments to establish and effectively co-manage these areas, ensuring the conservation of essential habitats and species while promoting the sustainable use of fisheries.

9. Africa is the lesser contributor to the rise in greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, yet it disproportionately bears the burden of its consequences. Urgent action is needed to activate mechanisms for accessing climate funds, with a focus on adapting the fisheries and aquaculture sector, supporting the most vulnerable coastal communities, and safeguarding those who depend on fisheries resources for food and nutrition security.
10. Strengthening international partnerships is crucial for addressing transboundary marine challenges, such as illegal fishing and pollution. Africa calls for increased support and collaboration to enhance sub-regional and regional capacity for ocean governance and protection.

These messages reflect Africa's unwavering commitment to the sustainable use and protection of the ocean and its vital resources. They underscore the importance of global solidarity and collaborative action in fostering a healthy and resilient ocean, which is essential for the well-being of both current and future generations. As we engage all stakeholders to accelerate action towards conserving and sustainably using our oceans, Africa stands ready to contribute meaningfully to the shared vision of a sustainable ocean-based economy and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 14.

In the interest of amplifying Africa's voice on the global stage and promoting sustainable governance of our oceans, the United Nations African Member States gathered at the consultation for the Third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) endorse the effort of the Kingdom of Morocco to unify the African's voice and effectively communicate these key messages at the upcoming UN Ocean Conference, as well as at related events.