ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS)

Contents

Section I

INTRODUCTION

Background

1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) maritime domain (EMD) comprises the adjacent Atlantic Ocean, islands, estuaries, lagoons, archipelagos, deltas, wetlands, creeks, coral reefs, mangrove forests, sandy beaches and dunes, as well as inland waterways such as lakes, rivers, falls, dams and streams, which are the lifeblood of the Community. Collectively, 11 of the 15 ECOWAS Member States have a 2 868 nautical mile coastline on the Atlantic Ocean – a vast and diverse region that stretches from the sandy deserts of northern Senegal bordering Mauritania to the north, in the Niger Delta region and bordering Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea to the east. Although Cape Verde is the only island ECOWAS Member State, all of ECOWAS is affected by or dependent upon the maritime domain.

2. The associated maritime ecosystem provides a rich biodiversity, fresh water from inland rivers and lakes, as well as the bounty of the Atlantic Ocean. This

ecosystem provides critical life-supporting activities for a majority of the West African population, most of whom depend on it directly or indirectly for their survival, whether through employment, trade, transport, arts and culture, and aqua-farming or as a primary source of protein. The fishing industry provides employment to millions West Africans and significant export revenue to the region's economy.

3. All ECOWAS Member States are thus linked to the region's maritime resources. These include the three landlocked countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) that are linked by maritime inland waterways, lakes and rivers. Six countries share the Niger River (the longest in the region), namely Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Benin. In addition, the landlocked countries need access to the sea for the import and export of goods. For a number of ECOWAS countries, resources from the EMD, which include oil and gas exploration, account for most of their foreign earnings.

4. West African countries, either individually or collectively, are confronted with growing and multifaceted challenges to their maritime domain. The main concerns relate to overexploitation of marine resources, rapid degradation of the marine environment through

pollution, coastal erosion, and rise in sea level, and criminal acts at sea. Piracy, armed robbery at sea, smuggling, drug and human trafficking, illegal, un-reported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and illegal migration also have links to transnational criminal groups. The lack of security and safety of maritime navigation in the ECOWAS waters has made sea transportation more risky, expensive and deadly.

5. These challenges impede the realisation of the full potential of the EMD, undermine efforts aimed at accelerating economic development and integration in the region, and thus aggravate poverty and political instability.

6. In 2008, Member States adopted the ECOWAS Vision 2020, which set out the strategic objectives of the Community for a borderless region, sustainable development, peace and good governance, and integration into the global market, as well as its transformation from an 'ECOWAS of states' to an 'ECOWAS of people'. The challenges in the maritime domain seriously undermine efforts aimed at realising the objectives of the ECOWAS Vision 2020 and the goals of the July 1993 revised ECOWAS Treaty (Revised Treaty). Indeed, given the maritime domain's critical role in development and in achieving the

fundamental ideals of the Community, the challenges represent a foremost priority for the 15 ECOWAS Member States. It is also evident that the region will not fully achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if urgent measures are not undertaken nationally and regionally to mitigate the fast-developing threats to the maritime domain.

7. Effective measures will depend on the extent to which ECOWAS Member States are willing and able to harness regional resources, work together to enhance the effectiveness of individual states, and work in close cooperation with all stakeholders. This should include key continental and international actors , and must complement individual and collective intervention in the maritime domain. The ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS) and implementation plan should stop and reverse these negative trends in the maritime domain and set out common standards to regulate and streamline related activities.

8. The trans-boundary nature of maritime resources such as rivers, lakes, seas, minerals, oil and other maritime ecosystems makes regional cooperation imperative due to common experiences with violent conflicts over the control, distribution and management of the associated resources.

Mandate and legal basis for the EIMS

9. The Revised Treaty provides a firm basis for the development of a regional maritime strategy as it addresses, among others, IUU fishing, extractive activities, protection of the natural environment, and cooperation during natural disasters.

10. The development of the EIMS additionally responds to the commitments made by ECOWAS Member States in several regional, continental and international legal instruments. (See Annex A)

Integrated approach

11. The EIMS emphasises a people-centric response to the management and exploitation of the maritime domain and supports the shift from an 'ECOWAS of states' to an 'ECOWAS of people'. In this context, the EIMS is predicated on inter-agency collaboration nationally and must bring together political affairs, legal matters, regional security and defence, law enforcement (police, gendarmerie, intelligence, investigation), maritime administration, and port authority, early warning/observation and monitoring and response, agriculture, environment, water resources, customs, industry, fisheries, strategic

planning, transport and telecommunication, energy, trade, research and statistics, free movement of people, multilateral surveillance, employment and drug control, humanitarian and social affairs, human resources and development, gender, youth and civil society organisations (CSOs), industry, oceanography, shipping, and aquaculture etc, to coordinate and synergise their activities and responses in the maritime domain.

12. The implementation of this strategy requires the participation and collaboration of various stakeholders, who assume collective responsibility for the EMD with a common focus. This underscores the need for integrated policies that are well articulated to mitigate collateral impacts or consequences.

13. The EIMS is designed to complement continental efforts and to enhance synergies with all stakeholders, including the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), the Maritime Organisation for West and Central Africa (MOWCA) and other regional mechanisms and neighbouring countries important for achieving the goals of the EIMS. It, therefore, represents a tool for cooperation nationally, bilaterally and multilaterally, involving all the stakeholders dealing with different sectoral issues in the maritime domain.

Principles

14. The EIMS is based on the following principles:

    i. The maritime domain is critical for economic development and affects both coastal and non-coastal Member States;

    ii. Maritime challenges are transnational, trans-regional and inter-related and cannot be overcome by any single nation. Thus the need for coordination and cooperation, in close collaboration with neighbouring states, trans-atlantic, European and global counterparts;

    iii. Effective governance of the maritime domain, based particularly on democratic principles on universal human rights, is key to unlocking the potential of the EMD and the success of the strategy;

    iv. Countering the challenges to the EMD requires both security and non-security strategies. In this context, criminal justice responses based on a solid foundation of the rule of law is an essential element to mitigating the associated challenges.

Vision statement

15. The vision for the EIMS is a prosperous, safe and peaceful EMD for all its peoples that will allow environmentally sustainable development and wealth creation based on efficient management and good governance.

16. The EIMS will also form an integral part of the implementation architecture of the AU Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) and is closely aligned with similar initiatives in neighbouring regions, such as ECCAS.

Scope of the EIMS

17. The EIMS identifies the major challenges to the maritime domain and offers a set of comprehensive priority actions that should be undertaken nationally and regionally. It addresses five strategic objectives, each of which is discussed in a separate section below:

    i. Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen maritime governance;

    ii. Strategic Objective 2: Maritime security and safety;

iii. Strategic Objective 3: Maritime environmental management;

iv. Strategic Objective 4: Optimise the ECOWAS maritime economy;

iv. Strategic Objective 5: Promote maritime awareness and research.

18. Each strategic issue introduces the challenges in the maritime domain and proposes strategies to address those.

Section II

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Approach

19. The strategic objectives constitute the ends to be achieved and are the pillars of the EIMS. The priority actions describe the ways in which they will be achieved and a framework (strategic plan) is captured in Enclosure 1. The means required for successful implementation will be derived from a detailed analysis of the ways, and will define the capabilities and capacities required to achieve the ends. This

will be achieved in close collaboration with all the stakeholders. ECOWAS Member States are expected vigorously to pursue and initiate actions and define policies to address the challenges to the maritime domain. While there are similarities between them, they have been recorded separately for clarity.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE: STRENGTHEN MARITIME GOVERNANCE

20. Governance includes all legal and policy requirements, the tasks to be performed, the organisation structures and, most importantly, the associated mechanisms that enable the implementation and execution of the strategy.

21. Governance of the maritime domain is complex and multidimensional and must ensure compliance with international laws, as well as with continental and regional commitments.

22. Effective and efficient governance of the maritime domain is essential for the EIMS to be successful. Effective governance will create the stability required in the sector to build confidence in the ECOWAS initiatives and will encourage Member States to implement similar controls/guidelines in their national domains. The diverse nature of the maritime domain

requires the alignment of administrative activities that the various stakeholders should perform to achieve their individual and collective objectives. Mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency at all levels are essential for good governance.

23. Communication, coordination and collaboration among Member States and other stakeholders regionally, continentally and internationally are essential, such as that among ECOWAS, ECCAS, GGC and MOWCA.

Action 1.1 – Develop and promote efficient and responsible maritime resource management

24. Poor management of the rich ECOWAS maritime resources has resulted in overexploitation and the pending destruction of these resources, with substantive deleterious impact on the peoples of the region. Efficient and responsible management practices are urgently needed to contribute to the sustainability of those resources and substantial economic and developmental benefits.

25. Priority actions required:

i. Implement comprehensive plans for the protection, further development and responsible manage-

ment of all resources in the ECOWAS maritime domain;

ii. Develop a plan to ensure a comprehensive and appropriate ethics regime;

iii. Develop and establish appropriate inspector general functions;

iv. Develop an effective mechanism to implement anti-corruption programmes to stamp out corruption in both private and government sectors, particularly security enforcement agencies;

v. Enhance capacity-building of national maritime institutions including regular training for maritime authorities (military and civilians), customs officials, and other technical and operational experts;

vi. Encourage Member States to review their criminal justice regime on anti-corruption laws to include severe penalties

Action 1.2 – Define maritime domain

26. Essential in the governance process is defining the areas where control needs to be exercised. Claims to exclusive economic zones (EEZs) are a common source of conflict between countries as the claims of

one country often overlap those of others – especially where rich resources lie within disputed areas. Clear delineation of maritime borders and associated claims, and common agreement thereto, is essential for harmonious coexistence and the management thereof.

27. Priority actions required:

    i.   ECOWAS has to develop a policy for the management of the EMD (ie combined ECOWAS Member States EEZs);

    ii.   Member States must negotiate amicable solutions to disputes to assume the right for responsible exploitation of resources within these zones, including zones where maritime boundaries have not been defined yet;

    iii. Member States to implement the relevant provisions of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), especially Part V.

Action 1.3 – Establish and strengthen governance mechanisms

28. The AU's African Maritime Transport Charter (AMTC) encourages the formation of multisectoral clusters where business integration and competitiveness are

enhanced. These clusters should **not be organised** on the principle of exclusivity (excluding those with a different business focus), but rather **include organisations** from different sectors.

29. Priority actions required:

   i.   Involve all major actors, including civil society and media organisations, the local population, the academic and research communities and any other relevant actors, before the formulation of legislative guidance in the maritime domain;

   ii. Organise national government departments and ECOWAS Commission departments to facilitate implementation and harmonisation of the policies in the different sectors of the maritime domain (establish clusters);

   iii. Involve all ECOWAS policy organs and institutionalise regular meetings of such organs or their technical committees, including at the level of heads of state and government, to review policy implementation and developments in the maritime domain;

   iv. Build on both the current training regional capacities (ie the Regional Maritime University

in Accra, and the Regional Maritime Institute in Abidjan) as well as Member States' focal points to monitor study and research issues on maritime security, including the collection, analysis and dissemination of maritime security data.

Action 1.4 – Strengthen regulations and the rule of law

30. Applicable legislation needs to be current and relevant, and adequate enforcement mechanisms are required to achieve these objectives.

31. Priority actions required:

  i.   Develop policy directives or regulations, supported by standard operating procedures (SOPs), for every maritime activity that affects the wellbeing of the maritime domain, with in-built compliance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure effective national implementation;

  ii. Strengthen the criminal justice enforcement regimes nationally on maritime matters such as piracy and armed robbery, fishing, environmental protection and maritime economy;

  iii. Encourage the adoption of policies and legal reforms to establish resource-based legal frameworks for

coastal resources, water resources, forestry, land management and biodiversity;

iv. Ensure adherence of enforcement agencies to national and international law;

v. Adopt a common ECOWAS policy requiring all shipping registered to ECOWAS Member States and all seaborne traffic in transit, or active, in ECOWAS waters, to be equipped with a long-range tracking system. This should contribute in the monitoring of maritime activities and improve maritime security and safety. (Also see Strategic Objective 2: Maritime security and safety)

Action 1.5 – Strengthen international cooperation

32. The international community benefits from a healthy, safe and prosperous African maritime domain. Thus, international recognition of African initiatives and cooperation are important to stabilise and secure its maritime environment.

33. Priority actions required:

i. Encourage Member States to claim their respective outer maritime limits, including their extended continental shelf where applicable, and to accept the associated responsibilities foreseen by UNCLOS

and the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) as amended;

ii. Facilitate the implementation of the 2010 Revised AU AMTC and constructively participate in the implementation of the African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS-50), which, among others, provides for the creation of a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA) registered and recognised under international maritime law. This will require international support and endorsement;

iii. Promote and deepen collaborative efforts among Member States and with international partners, relevant international organisations [eg United Nations funds and programmes, the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)], and other technical institutions;

iv. Facilitate the development of regional memoranda of understanding (MoUs)/protocols for integrated maritime policies in consultation with stakeholders to facilitate the exchange of best practices;

v. Implement the relevant ECOWAS mutual legal assistance (MLA) instruments to take advantage of the associated benefits.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO:
A SAFE AND SECURE MARITIME DOMAIN

34. Maritime security and safety constitutes a fundamental pillar for the survival of the maritime domain. It deals with threats to maritime navigation, transport and other peaceful uses of the maritime domain, particularly the oceans, seas and other navigable waterways. In this context, this EIMS stresses the need for urgent action to address prevailing and future threats to maritime security and safety.

Action 2.1 – Strengthen surveillance and information networks

35. Maritime surveillance is essential in ensuring the safe use of the sea, securing the EMD and detecting threats relating to safe navigation, marine pollution, law enforcement and overall security.

36. Some monitoring and surveillance activities are carried out by Member States, but the threats they address are transnational. Within most Member States surveillance activities concern fishing and the environment, such as oil pollution, policing the seas, detection/investigation of illicit trafficking, enforcement of customs and immigration legislation. These activities, however, reside with different enforcement agencies, operating

independently from one another. This often results in the suboptimal use of scarce resources.

37. ECOWAS needs to 'pool' the resources of Member States and adjacent regions and/or shared surveillance capabilities for the collaborative advantage of the region. The use of technology to enhance surveillance, monitoring and information gathering, analysis, processing and dissemination is essential for the optimal utilisation of the maritime environment, and Member States/regions should collaborate to the maximum extent possible.

38. Priority action areas:

    i.   Integrate, align or reorganise any existing cooperative efforts or arrangements relating to combating unlawful acts against maritime personnel, facilities or equipment;

    ii. Enhance information/intelligence exchange, training and capacity building, including basic and improved specialised training for staff dealing with maritime security;

    iii. Establish and expand operational networks among law enforcement entities operating at all seaports and major river border posts in Member States. Encourage Community Members also to establish

specialised units for port control or mobile border operations in key areas;

iv. Develop and strengthen cooperation on patrolling, surveillance and information-gathering systems;

v. Encourage CSOs to contribute towards the above efforts.

Action 2.2 – Protect and defend the EMD

39. Member States must defend and protect the claimed territories to ensure safety and security, protection of the environment, fisheries control, and the rule of law in the EMD. Collaboration between neighbouring regions and countries is essential to collectively manage shared boundaries.

40. Priority actions required:

i. Promote cooperation among Member States' navies, and maritime law enforcement entities and augment marine capabilities among naval forces of Member States to enable each to protect its EEZ and contribute to the collective maritime security in the region through joint patrols;

ii. Encourage Member States to negotiate and conclude MoUs and other agreements where necessary with other UN Member States and international organisations, requiring all ships/vessels in transit in West African waters to be fitted with transponders to facilitate tracking/monitoring and policing;

iii. Enhance cooperation with all stakeholders dealing with different maritime issues, including fisheries, maritime commerce, transport, maritime tourism and academia;

iv. Promote a cross-sector interagency approach to improve the concept of integrated coastal area management (ICAM) in Africa.

Action 2.3 – Prevent and combat piracy and armed robbery at sea

41. The threat to the West African maritime domain posed by piracy and armed robbery at sea is not a recent development, as unlawful and other criminal activities have been linked to the West African waterways for centuries.

42. Piracy and armed robbery, mostly theft of petroleum assets and other cargo, cost the region billions in US$

each year. Maritime piracy and armed robbery further impose direct costs on humanitarian assistance and have an impact on maritime economic activities such as oil production, cost of energy, insurance and shipping costs, tourism and fishing. Pirate attacks also increase the risk to maritime trade, which relies on shipping, and the payment of ransom increases costs, which are then borne by consumers through increased prices of goods and services.

43. Priority actions required:

i. Strengthen the national capacities to detect, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate piracy and armed-robbery-at-sea cases, and establish/improve national asset seizure, confiscation and management systems;

ii. Condemn piracy and armed robbery at sea wherever it may occur in the world, particularly in West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea;

iii. Encourage Member States to adopt and implement all relevant national, regional, continental and international legal instruments, frameworks and initiatives for the prevention and combating of piracy and armed robbery at sea;

iv. Strengthen the technical and operational partnership between ECOWAS and ECCAS in the prevention and combating of piracy and armed robbery, terrorism, acts of kidnapping and hijacking, drug and human trafficking, arms smuggling and other unlawful acts committed in their combined maritime domains;

v. Strengthen cooperation with MOWCA and GGC to address the complex threats to maritime transport and navigation.

Action 2.4 – Promote and protect the safety of maritime navigation and passage

44. SOLAS requires all coastal countries to ensure that hydrographic surveys are carried out, nautical charts and publications are published and kept up to date, and maritime safety information (MSI) services are provided.

45. The hydrography of Africa is poorly documented and maintained because of limited capacity to conduct the required surveys in accordance with International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) specifications. Poor or outdated port/harbour approaches can result in costly accidents (pollution, navigational risks and others) and/or even loss of life. It is the responsibility

of countries that have registered their claims to an EEZ to ensure the safe passage of all shipping through their waters.

46. There is limited capacity in Africa to chart its waters (EEZ) and to manage the requirements for maritime navigational safety. The documenting of changes (to the sea floor/riverbeds, approaches and navigational systems) and issuing of navigational warnings are essential services that each country adjacent to oceans/seas, lakes and rivers must deliver to all users.

47. Priority actions required:

   i. Member States should join the IHO to advance maritime safety, efficiency, and the protection and sustainable use of the marine environment, and to plan for compliance with its requirements. This might entail collaboration with other countries with hydrographic capabilities and with littoral countries;

   ii. Member States are to review/develop and implement national maritime safety measures that will contribute to improving maritime safety across the ECOWAS region;

   iii. Demand adherence to the International Regulation for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG)

and promote the peaceful use of the high seas and the principles of the freedom of navigation, freedom of over-flight, freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines, freedom of fishing and freedom of scientific research, in accordance with the conditions stipulated in Article 87 of UNCLOS;

iv. Facilitate financing of safe maritime and inland waterway transport activities.

Action 2.5 – Eliminate maritime transnational organised crime

48. Criminals are exploiting the weak law enforcement at sea in West Africa to traffic a range of products through the region: drugs (mostly cocaine from South America to Europe), cigarettes, weapons (conventional and non-conventional) and ammunition, people (destined for illegal migration or the sex trade), counterfeit medicines, toxic waste (including e-waste), oil and natural resources (such as hardwood and diamonds).

49. In its 2012 Transnational Organised Crime Threat Assessment (TOCTA) report for West Africa, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) singled out West Africa as an emerging source of trafficking in methamphetamine for illicit markets in East Asia, with couriers travelling through Europe.

These transnational criminal networks are undermining the rule of law, deepening corruption, polluting the environment, violating human rights, stealing natural resources, depleting maritime resources and jeopardising health. The UNODC estimated that the volume of pure cocaine through West Africa in 2010 was about 18 tons, valued at about US$ 1,25 billion.

50. Priority actions required:

    i.   Fully implement the ECOWAS regional action plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and drug abuse in West Africa;

    ii. Initiate/extend actions to combat organised crime and illicit trafficking in West Africa;

    iii. Strengthen the national capacities to detect, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate organised crime and illicit trafficking cases, and establish/ improve national asset seizure, confiscation and management systems;

    iv. Seek to provide appropriate levels of equipment and incentives to maritime law enforcement agents and justice personnel to support their work.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE: MARITIME ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

51. A healthy environment is critical to human survivability. The economy and food security of the ECOWAS region is based importantly on natural resources extracted from the maritime domain. This ECOWAS lifeline is, however, deteriorating rapidly through pollution and is losing its rich biodiversity. As a result, ecosystems are destroyed and food resources are being depleted.

52. The Atlantic Ocean is a significant source of oil and gas, but the potential for pollution is always lurking. Africa's oil spill disasters are believed to cause damage worth billions of dollars and significant loss of life and affect millions of people. In addition, ECOWAS member state coastal areas play a critical role in socioeconomic development in West Africa. They are homes to the majority of human population – about 46% of Ghanaians and 70% of Senegalese live along the coast, while approximately 70% of the cities in ECOWAS countries are located along the coast.

53. The West Africa pollution problem is aggravated by exposure to harmful and toxic waste or hazardous materials caused by the deliberate dumping of toxic chemical wastes. Vessels take advantage of inadequate monitoring and enforcement capabilities

to dump harmful and toxic waste or hazardous materials, which has become extremely lucrative for organised crime syndicates. Industrial pollution and the discharge of domestic untreated waste are also major pollutants of large areas of the West African coast, including lagoons, creeks and near-shore areas. These have all been polluted, resulting in an increase in human diseases and loss of fisheries resources. In addition, oil tankers 'rinse' their tanks while in littoral waters in West Africa.

Action 3.1 – Prevent and combat pollution

54. Since human action is the major cause of environmental degradation and resource depletion, the crisis in the ECOWAS environment can be reversed. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a strategic approach and systematic responses to manage more effectively the threats to the maritime environment.

55. Priority areas of action:

   i.   Ensure the implementation of the Abidjan Convention adopted in 1981 and implemented in 1984 as the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region;

ii. Ensure that all appropriate measures are in place to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution caused by normal or accidental discharges/dumping from ships and aircraft, and ensure the effective application of internationally recognised rules and standards to control this type of pollution;

iii. Prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution caused by industrial, agricultural and domestic discharges into rivers, estuaries and coastal establishments, and outfalls or coastal dumping emanating from any other sources in the ECOWAS region;

iv. Prohibit in ECOWAS states' territorial seas, oceans, land, and air the importation, exportation, circulation and stockpiling or dumping of transboundary hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, chemical and biological waste or substances falling under the definition of 'hazardous waste' as defined in Article of the 1991 Bamako Convention or in Article 1 of the Basel Convention;

v. Establish stringent regulations and liability for chemical and hazardous waste management to ensure adequate treatment, safe disposal and

effective management of hazardous waste in the Community;

vi. Ensure that policies, plans, programmes, strategies, projects and activities likely to affect natural resources, ecosystems and the environment in general are the subject of adequate impact assessment at the earliest possible stage and that regular environmental monitoring and audits are conducted;

vii. Establish a cooperative network based on coastal observation stations and remote sensing techniques to provide data on trends in marine environment, beach and coastal water pollution;

viii. Pursue national, regional or internationally supported development projects that are environment friendly and demonstrate sound environmental management practices, such as projects supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), and International Maritime Organisation (IMO);

ix. Cooperate in activities with other parties, including ECCAS, MOWCA, GGC and other strategic

partners and interested organisations, directly and through their secretariats, on the dissemination of information on the transboundary movement of chemical and hazardous and other wastes, especially e-waste, to improve the environmentally sound management of such waste and to prevent illegal traffic.

Action 3.2 – Manage natural disasters

56. Natural disasters such as floods and storms cause tremendous damage, destruction and loss of lives. In general, the ECOWAS region is poorly equipped to respond to or mitigate the impact of such disasters and processes, and plans and capacities must be developed.

57. Priority actions required:

   i.   Facilitate implementation of the ECOWAS framework for addressing the threat posed by disasters and other natural calamities, in particular, have Community Members renew their vows to exercise good faith in the implementation of the 2006 ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction (EPDRR);

   ii. Strengthen national and regional capabilities for a stronger disaster preparedness response, through

regular training, simulations and mock disaster exercises;

iii. Become states parties to all the UN, AU, ECOWAS and other relevant international legal instruments to regulate the occurrence of disasters and to protect humans against sudden and unforeseen natural calamities;

iv. Adopt a mainstream approach that integrates climate change considerations into coastal-zone integrated management policies, programmes and activities at all levels of governance;

v. Monitor and set up safeguard systems against the effects of climate change on coastal and marine environments. In this context, Community Members should extend cooperation to advanced industrialised countries to benefit from their advanced early warning and early response systems.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR: OPTIMISE THE ECOWAS MARITIME ECONOMY

58. The degradation of the maritime environment contributes to the depletion of natural resources, a cornerstone of the ECOWAS economy that is based on the exploration and exploitation of natural maritime

resources such as fishing, oil and mineral extraction, and transport. The West African maritime economy faces a bleak future if drastic action and/or control measures are not implemented soon to reverse prevailing negative trends.

59. This objective should promote sustainable economic development by maximising the potential of maritime resources in West Africa, as well as ensure food security and preserve maritime biodiversity. In this context, it seeks to prevent and combat the current and future threats to the maritime economy.

Action 4.1 – Develop and promote fisheries and aquaculture

60. Due to depleted fish resources and stocks in many areas of sub-Saharan Africa, fish consumption is too low to benefit vulnerable populations. Changing eating habits and increased population growth would put further strain on the availability of scarce fish resources and would require a drastic increase in food production over the next decade.

61. Develop sustainable management practices to stop the over-exploitation of fish stock and reduce the levels of pollution, thereby allowing the fish stock to increase, recover and rebuild. It is claimed that

fish stocks grow faster in marine reserves, where fishing is restricted. This is where aquaculture, or fish farming, can contribute to alleviating food insecurity and malnutrition. Aquaculture in Africa is, however, poorly developed in comparison with that of other continents and is hampered by limited access to land, poor governance and management and issues such as water pollution, gender discrimination and unfair labour practices.

62. Priority actions required:

    i. Encourage Member States to further consider, determine and implement responsive policy reforms in fisheries governance and to develop sustainable inland fisheries and aquaculture;

    ii. Build on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) 2005 Abuja Declaration on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in Africa as well as on the UN conservation and fish stocks management agreements, and, as such, incorporate and implement a common fisheries policy for the conservation, management and exploitation of fish stocks in accordance with the ecosystems and precautionary approach for the whole CEMZA, when established;

iii.   Support regional and basin-wide fisheries bodies to manage shared resources;

iv.   Improve market access for small-scale inland producers, processors and traders to ensure that wealth generation, and social and environmental benefits are sustained;

v.   Conserve and rehabilitate aquatic environments and habitats essential to living aquatic resources and aquatic biodiversity, and take measures to prevent or mitigate the adverse impacts of aquaculture on the aquatic and coastal environment, and communities;

vi.   Promote and foster small-, medium- and large-scale aquaculture production in a sustainable and environment-friendly manner compatible with the rational use of land and water resources and evolving market opportunities;

vii.   Implement programmes to recover fish stocks based on sound scientific information. Policies on the exploitation of fishing resources must consider the maritime ecosystem and police the terrain for compliance;

viii.   Protect declared marine reserve areas (MRAs) and enforce the rules governing them to preserve West Africa's marine biodiversity, protect marine

species threatened by unsustainable overfishing in Africa, and encourage ecotourism.

Action 4.2 – Prevent, deter, and eliminate IUU fishing

63. IUU fishing presents a major threat to fish stocks, and the marine environmental and coastal communities. It represents unfair competition for fishermen who exploit fish resources legally, and results in significant economic losses for coastal states. Global losses are estimated at between US$10 billion and US$24 billion annually, representing between 11 and 26 million tons of fish.[2] IUU also often involves the capture of endangered marine species in West Africa, such as sharks, turtles and dolphins.

64. West African waters are estimated to have the highest levels of IUU fishing in the world as a proportion of the region's total catch, with the illegal catch in the wider Eastern Central Atlantic estimated by the Marine Resources Assessment Group to be worth between US$ 828 million and US$ 1,6 billion per year, or 37% of seafood catches.

65. Priority actions required:

   i.   Work with neighbouring states and relevant regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) to impose stringent regulations on

fishing activities and take all necessary measures to preserve the environment and the diversity of fish species in West Africa;

ii. Ensure that the harvesting, handling, processing and distribution of fish and fishery products are carried out in a manner that preserves and maintains the nutritional value, quality and safety of the products, reduces waste and minimises negative impacts on the environment;

iii. Encourage Member States to sign and ratify all the existing regional and international treaties dealing with fisheries and the preservation of natural resources, including the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing;

iv. Ensure that fisheries' interests, including the need for conservation of resources, are taken into account in the coastal zone and are integrated into coastal area management, planning and development. Marine protected areas (MPAs), involving 'co-management' among governments and coastal communities can be an effective management tool;

v. Encourage Member States authorising fishing and fishing support vessels to fly their flags to exercise effective control over those vessels in accordance with international law, and in adherence to all global, continental and regional initiatives for the responsible management of the EMD. States should desist from flagging foreign-owned fishing vessels that have no genuine link to the country, and restrict fishing access by vessels flying 'flags of convenience';

vi. Ensure participation of all stakeholders in policy-making, planning and implementation of sound fishing practices;

vii. Encourage Member States to share amongst themselves (making use of ECOWAS bodies and regional institutions such as RFMOs) the names of industrial fishing vessels that are licensed to operate in their EEZs and any warnings of fines issued for IUU fishing. To enable this sharing of information, Member States should require that all industrial fishing vessels operating in their EEZs use an internationally recognised unique vessel identifier, such as an IMO number, and that this number be displayed at all times and used when information is shared regionally on vessel access and sanctions.

Action 4.3 – Prevent illegal tapping and theft of oil

66. Although currently centred in Nigeria, the problem of illegal tapping of oils risks spreading to other ECOWAS Member States. Moreover, crude oil in Nigeria is also exported via the territorial waters and EEZs of neighbouring states, which must be addressed through collective regional action. Apart from the threat of pollution, governments and oil-producing companies suffer substantial loss of income. Illegal oil tapping further contributes to the escalation of violence and criminality due to the fight for control over bunkering opportunities.

67. Priority actions required:

    i. Condemn and criminalise theft and illegal tapping of oil and other natural resources;

    ii. Strengthen legislation to regulate oil and gas exploration and exploitation, and to specify the environmental responsibilities of explorers;

    iii. Conduct research and empirical studies to understand the nature, characteristics and true dimension of the illegal tapping of oil and gas in West Africa;

iv. Strengthen the national capacities to detect, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases linked to the illegal tapping of oil and gas, and establish/improve national asset seizure, confiscation and management systems;

v. Encourage Member States to share experiences and facilitate the development of regional mechanisms to improve oil and gas governance in the region as a means of preventing violent conflict and insecurity. Elaborate an ECOWAS policy to regulate and set common standards for Member States on the governance of natural resources in West Africa, particularly in a way that benefits local communities;

vi. Support intra- and inter-regional exchange of experiences and development of innovative approaches to resource governance. Consider practical measures for strengthening cooperation with ECCAS, MOWCA, GGC and other regional actors and stakeholders.

Action 4.4 – Promote marine tourism

68. Tourism can contribute to wealth creation and employment, and stimulate the protection and enhancement of environmental and cultural resources. Africa offers

considerable, albeit largely untapped, potential for tourism. Yet the tourism industry on much of the continent is not internationally competitive, despite some positive development in the past 30 years, as travellers increasingly demand higher-quality tourism experiences. Much more can be done.

69. One component is the promotion of the rich regional maritime cultural heritage, the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of indigenous societies that were inherited from past generations and bequeathed for the benefit of future generations. Many of these sites are either underwater or adjacent to the ocean, rivers, estuaries and lakes.

70. The efficient management of Africa's maritime cultural heritage can create important tourist attractions and should be developed and managed to ensure sufficient revenue generation. Underwater heritage sites are in danger of destruction and historic cultural heritage should be protected and preserved. Conservation should also include ecosystems that are most representative of and peculiar to areas under the jurisdiction of Member States, or are characterised by a high degree of biological diversity.

71. Priority actions required:

    i.   Encourage Member States to implement the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Cultural Underwater Heritage Sites;

    ii.   Identify tourism as a priority sector for economic growth;

    iii.   Identify key 'anchor' projects nationally and sub-regionally that will generate significant spinoffs and assist in promoting economic integration – i.e. cross-border nature parks, maritime reserves;

    iv.   Promote tourism marketing. Develop a regional marketing strategy;

    v.   Promote regional partnerships;

    vi.   Promote research and development;

    vii.   Promote investment in the construction and development of environment-friendly tourism infrastructure and products;

    viii.   Develop a code of conduct and ethics for the regional tourist industry, focusing on maritime tourism;

    ix.   Mobilise financial resources;

x. Member States to institute collaborative agreements with their own governments, civil society and other interested parties to contribute to the preservation of their national heritage.

Action 4.5 – Develop maritime-related infrastructure

72. West Africa's infrastructure deficit is one of the key factors preventing it from realising its full potential for economic growth, competitiveness in global markets and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Adequate infrastructure plays a crucial role in economic development and poverty reduction. Inadequate maritime transport-related infrastructure, such as ports, harbours, their equipment and the connecting rail- and road networks, imposes major costs on business in terms of lost output and additional costs incurred. Some estimates suggest that, with an improved infrastructure stock, economic growth rates could be at least 1% higher than they are. It also expected that volume of trade carried at sea will increase by 50% over the next 20 years, from the 35 000 billion ton miles it is now. Developing and completing infrastructure networks are, therefore, recognised as crucial in advancing regional integration.

73. Priority actions required:

    i.   Formulate a master plan for the development of regional maritime-related infrastructure (e.g. energy, transport, tourism, transboundary water resources), opportunities for the manufacturing industries, with a local shipbuilding, repair and maintenance focus; and service industries, to generate employment, expertise and investment;

    ii.   Prepare an implementation strategy and processes, including a priority action plan;

    iii.   Develop, through the interdepartmental or cluster approach, an effective framework for interaction among different industries and sectors, identify the interfaces among different sectors, and develop mechanisms for their optimal management. This boundary management should be carefully studied to avoid confrontation and be deliberately planned to derive maximum benefit;

    iv.   Support initiatives by Member States and private businesses to establish public/private partnerships (PPPs) to meet their objectives, ie shipbuilding and -repair, and services. Similarly, they should consider outsourcing maritime centres of excellence to PPPs, to provide high-quality, durable and efficient service to the maritime industry;

v. All maritime domains, including the port authorities of Member States are encouraged to conclude partnership agreements to support the use of available resources sub-regionally, regionally and continentally. These clusters should be based on the principle of 'from Africa for Africa' to retain and maintain the required maritime expertise;

vi. Encouraged Member States to assess the efficiency of their major ports and institute measures for improvements. Inefficiency equates with lack of competitiveness, which increases the cost of trading through those ports. Shipping companies will seek alternatives if this is not addressed;

vii. Support and encourage initiatives such as the West and Central Africa MoU on port state control (Abuja MoU) to eradicate the operation of sub-standard shipping practices, enhancing security and safety, protecting the marine environment from pollution, and improving the working and living conditions of personnel on board ships.

Action 4.6 – Regulate mining and other exploitation of natural resources

74. The ocean and riverbeds are rich in oil and precious minerals that offer many economic development

opportunities, but need to be managed responsibly by competent authorities nationally and regionally. National governments must, under the guidance of the regional bodies, guide responsible extraction to the benefit of all their people. However, the extraction, exploration or deep-sea mining of these raise concerns about potential environmental impacts. The protection of the marine environment is of utmost importance.

75. Priority actions required:

    i.   Scrupulously enforce the ECOWAS Directive C/DIR.3/05/09 of May 2009 on the harmonisation of guiding principles and policies I mining sector. Transform the directive into a more stringently binding mechanism with monitoring powers and mechanisms, such as a convention;

    ii. In support of the AU/NEPAD initiatives, promote regional and continental intra-African trade in energy to influence economic and social development and the economic integration of the regional economic communities;

    iii. Ensure the development of energy resources and their exports for intra-African trade and global export to the rest of the world, and the processing of such resources on African soil;

iv. Ensure that all necessary environmental and human rights concerns have been addressed and are respected by all stakeholders in all their operations in West Africa.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FIVE: PROMOTE MARITIME AWARENESS AND RESEARCH

76. One of the greatest challenges to maritime safety and security in the region is poor maritime domain awareness. Therefore, it is crucial to create awareness in the uses and abuses of the EMD, the danger this poses and the required actions in keeping with best management practices (BMP) to address these abuses. Knowledge about this is required, transferred through education and development of technical skills in the diverse fields of the maritime domain. Any policy on the maritime domain, whether national, regional or international, must address this challenge.

Action 5.1 – Create awareness

77. This action aims to deepen awareness and knowledge of threats to the EMD.

78. Priority actions required:

    i.   Increase the awareness of decision makers, the general public and other stakeholders of the challenges and economic development opportunities related to the maritime domain and policy responses;

    ii.   Develop regional programmes, including the use of local and international media networks, television, radio and Internet sites, to raise the visibility of Maritime Africa, and improve the image of maritime activities and the seafaring professions;

    iii.   Collaborate with partners to contribute to the development of an atlas of the African seas, as envisaged by the AU;

    iv.   Promote the participation of maritime officials and other appropriate personnel in programmes offered by the World Maritime University, the International Maritime Law Institute and other international centres of excellence;

    v.   Enhance and develop academic and vocational programmes and curricula aimed at introducing maritime issues in schools and universities;

vi. Encourage Member States to support actively the celebrations of the oceans on World Oceans Day on 8 June, and the IMO's World Maritime Day during the last week of September;

viii. Enhance advocacy and awareness to ensure gender mainstreaming in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1325.

Action 5.2 – Conduct maritime research

79. Knowledge is the foundation of high-quality decision-making and needs to be continuously supported by research that informs action for policy and project implementation. Article 243 of the 1982 UNCLOS, which has been ratified by all Community Member States, stipulates that 'States and competent international organisations shall cooperate, through the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements, to create favourable conditions for the conduct of marine scientific research in the marine environment and to integrate the efforts of scientists in studying the essence of phenomena and processes occurring in the marine environment and the interrelations between them'.

80. Priority actions required:

   i.   Take the lead in promoting and building a maritime knowledge base as a foundation for establishing the required knowledge, skills and attitudes for an improved African maritime culture. This knowledge base will indicate the education, training and development needs that will assist in the creation of a maritime culture and encourage innovation in the maritime domain;

   ii. Raise the visibility and profile of the maritime industry in Africa, and ensure that, through research, the issues that are applicable to the oceans and seas are receiving attention equal to that given to the region's inland challenges;

   iii. Promote a concept that will provide West Africans with better and wider marine career prospects. This will include broadening the scope of maritime studies and enhancing skills and qualifications for the maritime professions;

   iv. Enhance and develop adequate national and regional maritime research and education institutions to serve all requirements in the EMD;

   v.   Encourage different research institutions to focus on niche areas and share knowledge/findings. The research must link and support continental

research priorities, recommend solutions for cross-sectoral challenges and maximise

synergies between Member States and regional efforts. More investment in marine research and technology will allow for innovative solutions for economic growth without further aggravating environmental degradation;

vi. Encourage Member States to support allocation or sourcing of funding for national and regional maritime training, research and education institutions, and to grant training scholarships;

vii. Encourage Member States to benefit from the Regional Maritime University in Accra and the Regional Maritime Institute in Abidjan;

viii. Review restrictive national legislation and allow business and industry to initiate their own collaboration mechanisms to promote an African/regional network of maritime clusters.

ANNEX A : LEGAL INSTRUMENTS QUOTED

- Abidjan Convention charter 1981
- AIMS-50 (31 January 2014)
- AMTC (2010)
- Bamako Convention on the ban on the import into Africa and the control of transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes within Africa (1991)
- Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal (1989)
- ECOWAS Revised Treaty (24 July 1993)
- FAO Agreement on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (2009)
- International Convention on the Continental Shelf (1958)
- International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (1974)
- UNESCO Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage (1972)
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982)

ANNEX B : ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abuja MOU	West Africa Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control
AIMS-50	Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050
AU	African Union
CEMZA	Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa
GGC	Gulf of Guinea Commission
COLREG	International Regulation for Preventing Collisions at Sea
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone
EIMS	ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy
EMD	ECOWAS maritime domain
EPDRR	ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction
FAO	United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation
ICAM	Integrated coastal area management
IHO	International Hydrographic Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IUU fishing	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLA	Mutual legal assistance
MOWCA	Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
PPP	Public/private partnership
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SOLAS	Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea
SOP	Standard operating procedure
TOCTA	Transnational Organised Crime Threat Assessment
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNODC	United Nations Office against Drug and Crime