



IOC Sub Commission for Africa
and the Adjacent Island States



2021 United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development
2030



Draft Concept Note

African Scientific Conference on Advancing the Blue Economy in Africa



**2025
African
Scientific
Conference**
on Advancing the Blue
Economy

Organized by:

IOC Sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States (IOCAFRICA)

In collaboration with

Global Ocean Observing System – Africa (GOOS-Africa)

Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI)

 **Venue:** Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Mombasa, Kenya

 **Dates:** 5–6 May 2025

Theme:

Scientific Perspective for Sustainable Blue Economy in Africa

Registration link: <https://rb.gy/fl4qgr>

1. Background and Context



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2030 United Nations Decade
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for Sustainable Development



Africa's blue economy represents a vast yet underutilised economic and environmental asset with the potential to drive sustainable development, enhance food sovereignty, and create employment opportunities. Despite the continent's extensive oceanic, coastal and inland water resources, multiple interrelated challenges continue to impede its full realisation. Ineffective regulatory frameworks due to lack of enforcement, overfishing, habitat destruction, marine pollution, uncontrolled coastal urbanisation and construction, etc; limit sustainable growth, while climate change accelerates sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events, exacerbating vulnerabilities of marine and coastal dependent communities. These factors collectively threaten biodiversity, ecological systems, economic resilience, and social stability, underscoring the urgent need for innovative, science-driven solutions.

Insufficient integration of scientific research into policy and practice is a critical barrier to unlocking the full potential of the blue economy. Innovative scientific research and results underpin the full realisation of the blue economy. While scientific infrastructure and massive investments into cutting-edge scientific research and education are uneven in Africa, even existing African scientific education institutions and infrastructures, capacity, and human power with highly qualified expertise on the continent and in the Diasporas are yet underutilised with limited regional collaboration, thus impeding sound scientific information-driven, and decision-making necessary for the effective ocean, coastal and in-land policy, governance and resource management, and establishment of appropriate national, regional and continental technology transfer mechanisms. Furthermore, inadequate and unsustainable national, regional and international financial investments in ocean research and education hinder progress. Addressing these systemic gaps requires a multi-sectoral approach that aligns scientific expertise with policymaking, industry innovation, and community engagement.

This scientific conference seeks to address these pressing challenges by convening experts from Academic and research institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, private sector entities, industries, and development organisations. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge exchange, the conference will serve as a platform for advancing cutting-edge research, promoting technological innovations, and formulating evidence-based policy recommendations. Topics such as sustainable coastal and ocean resources exploitation, including fisheries management, coastal tourism, offshore and coastal oil and gas, marine spatial planning, ocean policy and governance, renewable marine energy, and climate adaptation strategies etc., will be explored in depth.

The overarching goal of this conference is to bridge the existing gap between science, policy, and practice in Africa's blue economy. Through collaborative efforts, Africa will enhance scientific advancements to foster resilient and sustainable economic models that prioritise environmental conservation while ensuring equitable growth. By catalysing action at national and regional levels, this meeting will reinforce the existing foundation for a transformative shift towards a sustained, scientifically informed, economically viable, and ecologically responsible and equitable blue economy.

2. Objectives



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2021-2030
United Nations Decade
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The main objectives of the meeting are:

1. Knowledge Sharing: Facilitate the exchange of scientific research, case studies, and best practices relevant to the blue economy in Africa through keynote presentations, expert-led panel discussions, structured presentations, and interactive poster sessions;
2. Capacity Development: Empower African stakeholders to design, implement, and manage blue economy initiatives by leveraging conference elements such as expert presentations, panel discussions, knowledge exchange sessions, and poster presentations to facilitate learning and skill enhancement;
3. Policy Development: Provide evidence-based recommendations to inform policies, governance frameworks, and sustainable development strategies;
4. Collaboration and Networking: Foster partnerships among academia, governments, the private sector, and civil society to strengthen cooperation, promote knowledge-sharing, and enhance investment in the blue economy through joint initiatives and interdisciplinary scientific collaboration;
5. Sustainability and Resilience: Identify strategies to balance economic development with marine conservation and climate adaptation efforts.
6. The ultimate objective is to call on African Member States to develop adequate national ocean and coastal policy and governance frameworks and mechanisms

3. Scope of the Meeting

The meeting will focus on the following key thematic areas:

1. Science, Observations, Technology, and Innovation for Blue Economy Development
2. Climate Change, Ocean Health, and Sustainable Resource Management
3. Governance, Policy, Regional and International Cooperation for the Blue Economy
4. Emerging Opportunities for Africa's Blue Economy.

4. Expected Outcomes

The meeting aims to produce the following key outcomes:

1. A concise summary report capturing key discussions, research highlights, and key recommendations for sustainable blue economy practices and policies to feed into the IOCAFRICA-VIII and for further distribution.
2. A set of practical policy recommendations to inform African decision-makers and partners on enhancing ocean governance, integrating science into policy, and strengthening regional cooperation.
3. Identification of immediate research priorities and knowledge gaps that require further exploration and funding support.
4. Strengthened stakeholder networks, fostering collaboration between relevant institutions, scientists, policymakers, industry leaders, and development partners to support future initiatives.
5. Proposed next steps, follow-up mechanisms, and actions, including potential collaborative projects, capacity-development initiatives, and policy engagement opportunities.



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2021
2030 United Nations Decade
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5. Participants

The meeting will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- Scientists and researchers specialised in marine and aquatic sciences, policy, economics and governance.
- Policymakers and government officials from African countries.
- Representatives from relevant regional and international organisations
- Private sector actors in fisheries, energy, tourism, oil and gas, maritime and shipping industries, etc.
- Civil society organisations/NGOs and community representatives.
- Development partners and funding agencies.



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2030 for Sustainable Development



Provisional Agenda

Day 1: Setting the Stage for a Sustainable Blue Economy

<i>Time</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>No. of Presentations</i>	<i>Confirmed/Suggested Names</i>	<i>Chair(s)/Co-Chair(s)</i>
08:30 –	Registration & Welcome	Participants arrive and network	-	-	-
09:00	Coffee				
09:00 –	Opening Ceremony	Four opening remarks (5 minutes each)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Louise Haxthausen, Director and Representative, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa) Prof Kaudio Affian <i>Chair IOCAFRICA/GOOS-AFRICA</i> Ibukun Adewumi <i>Head of the IOCAFRICA Secretariat</i> Minister/Principal Secretary, Ministry of Blue Economy, Mining and Maritime Affairs, Kenya 	N/A
09:20					
09:20 – 10:30	Session 1 – Keynote Panel	Historical background and implementation of African initiatives in the Blue Economy	3	Keynote speaker AUC Director (TBC) Speakers: Rep. from AU-IBAR	Prof Koudio AFFIAN, <i>Chair IOCAFRICA and GOOS-Africa/ Ibukun Adewumi, Head IOCAFRICA</i>



IOC Sub Commission for Africa
and the Adjacent Island States



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development



				<p>Topic: 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIMS-Africa)</p> <p>Dr. Bernice McLean, <i>head of the Blue Economy Program at AUDA-NEPAD is (TBD)</i></p> <p>Topic: AUDA NEPAD Action Plan for Environment Initiative</p> <p>Dr George Mba, <i>Head AUC Blue Economy Unit</i></p> <p>Topic: The Africa Blue Economy Strategy.</p> <p>Dr Amodou Tall ECOWAS Fisheries and Blue Economy Expert</p>	
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break & Networking	Informal discussions and networking	-	-	-
11:00 – 12:00	Session 2 – Panel Presentations	Keeping track of International and Regional Blue Economy Initiatives	4	<p>Keynote: TBC</p> <p>Ambassador Dr. (Mrs.) Helen Gichuhi, <i>Secretary, Diaspora Welfare and Partnerships, State Department for Diaspora, Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs of Kenya.</i></p> <p>Topic: Implementation of Relevant Results and Recommendations for Africa of the First Global Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy: Harnessing the potential of our oceans, seas, and rivers to improve</p>	<p>Dr. Justin Ahanhanzo, <i>GOOS-AFRICA initiator and promoter, founding Coordinator</i></p>



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2021 United Nations Decade
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KMFRI
Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute

lives, Nairobi, Kenya, 26-28 November 2018.

Prof Amr Hamouda and/or Dr.Suzan Elgharabawy, NIOF, Egypt
Topic: Implementation of the Results and Recommendations of the African Conference on Priority Setting and Partnership Development for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, Alexandria, Egypt, 10-12 May 2022.

Dr Ahmed Khan
Topic: The AfDB support to Blue Economy initiatives and programmes in Africa

12:00
– 1:00
14:00
–
15:30

Lunch Break

Networking lunch

-

-

-

Session 3A –
Thematic

Science, Technology,
and Innovation for Blue
Economy (Part 1 – In
situ observations:
Cruises)

6

Keynote: Peter Haugan, (TBC)
Topic: Global and Regional Trends in
Marine Governance and Sustainability

Prof Amr Hamouda,
*Professor at National
Institute of Oceanography
and Fisheries and Co-Chair,
IOC/David KIRUGARA*

Dr. Edem Mahu, *Senior Lecturer,
Department of Marine and Fisheries
Sciences, College of Basic and Applied
Sciences, University of Ghana (TBD)*

Dr. Gilbert Siko, *Director of Marine & Polar
Research, South African Department of
Science and Innovation*
Topic: Cruise around Southern Africa)



IOC Sub Commission for Africa
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2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
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Dr. Suzan Elgharabawy, *Lecturer of Marine Geology and Geophysics, National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries/Co-Chair, IOCAFRICA*
Topic: Cruise around the Mediterranean and Red Seas

Dr. Juliet Igbo Kelechi, *Assistant Director, Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research*
Topic: Cruise Around the Gulf of Guinea),

Dr. Charles Magori, *Research Scientist at Kenya Marine & Fisheries Research Institute*
Topic: Cruise around the Eastern Africa.

Aileen Bohan, *Chair of GEBCO's Sub-Committee on Regional Undersea Mapping*
Topic: Seabed mapping around the world and Africa

15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break	Informal discussions and networking	-	-	-
16:00 – 17:00	Session 3B – Thematic	Science, Technology, and Innovation for Blue Economy (Part 2 – Remote sensing and space applications);	4	Keynote: Prof Kaudio AFFIAN, <i>Chair IOCAFRICA and GOOS-Africa</i> Prof Ojigi Mustapha Lazarus, <i>Executive Director - African Regional Institute for</i>	Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini, <i>Director of United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (TBC)/ Prof. Sias Mostert, CEO, Space</i>



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2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
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Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute

*Geospatial Information Science and
Technology (AFRIGIST)*
Topic: TBC

*Commercial Services,
Stellenbosch, South Africa*

Dr. Emmanuel Nkurunziza, *Director
General of the Regional Centre for
Mapping of Resources for Development
(RCMRD), Nairobi Kenya*
Topic: TBC

Prof. Anas Emran, *Director, African
Regional Centre for Space Science and
Technology Education*
Topic: TBC

Dr. Margareth Kyewalyanga, *Senior
Lecturer at Institute of Marine Sciences,
University of Dar es Salaam*
Topic: TBC

Dr Kan Jean KOUAME, *Directeur, Centre
Universitaire de Recherche et
d'Application en Télédétection,
Université Felix Houphouet Boigny
d'Abidjan*
Topic: TBC

Dr. Kwame Adu Agyekum
*Provost of the College Of Basic And
Applied Sciences (CBAS)/Director of the
GMES and Africa Project at the University
of Ghana*



IOC Sub Commission for Africa
and the Adjacent Island States



2021 United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
2030 for Sustainable Development



Topic: The MarCNoWA Project
Christo Whitle, Senior Scientific Officer ·
University of Cape Town
Topic: The MaRCoSIO Project

Day 2: Science, Governance, and Strategic Actions

09:00 – 09:15	Recap of Day 1		Edwin Mwashanga, <i>Project Officer IOCAFRICA</i>
09:15 – 10:30	Session 3C – Recap & Presentations	Science, Technology, and Innovation for Blue Economy C'td. (Part 3 – High Performance Computers and ocean modelling)	3–4 Keynote: Prof Abiodun Babatunde Professor and Director, <i>Nansen- Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research, University of Cape Town</i> Prof Juliet Hermes, Manager South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) Dr. Happy Sithole is the Center Manager of South Africa's National Integrated Cyberinfrastructure System (NICIS) Dr. Enrique Alvarez Fanju, Technical Coordinator of the OceanPrediction Decade Collaborative Center, Mercator Ocean International Topic: Ocean Prediction Enhancement in the Regions of Africa



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2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
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10:20 –	Coffee Break	Interactive discussions and networking	-	-	-
10:50 –	Session 4 – Thematic	Climate Change, Ocean Health, and Resource Management and Finance in Africa	3–4	Keynote: Dr David Obura, CORDIO Thomas Sberna, IUCN Great Blue Wall initiative Dr David Awolala, Director of Policy, African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES) Topic: Advancing Ocean Climate Action in Africa Dr. Arthur Tuda, <i>Executive Director of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association</i> Topic: The Role of Science and Innovations in Advancing the Blue Economy Jeff. Ardron, <i>Africa Oceans Director, The Nature Conservancy</i> Topic: Exploring innovative business models, financing mechanisms, and sustainable investment strategies and prospects for ocean conservation and development Arlette Schramm, <i>Global Ocean Accounts Partnership</i>	Dr Jacqueline Uku, Chief Research Scientist, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute/ Dr Kwame Kwrantag
12:20					



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2021 United Nations Decade
of Ocean Science
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Unlocking Finance for the
Sustainable Sustainable Ocean
Economy

12:20 –	Lunch Break	Networking lunch	-	-	-
14:00 –	Session 5 – Thematic	Governance, Policy, and Regional Cooperation for the Blue Economy	3–4	Keynote: Rep from Abidjan Convention, Nairobi Convention, Bengual Current Covention, Strengthening institutional frameworks, transboundary collaboration, and policy alignment Madaleine Nyiratuza, <i>Regional Technical Advisor for Water, Ocean Governance, Ecosystems and Biodiversity (Africa), UNDP</i> Topic: UNDP Ocean and Coastal Governance Programme Pierre Failler, <i>Centre for Ocean Governance, UK</i> Topic: Africa Regional Ocean Governance Framework: Yesterday, today and tomorrow Q&A	Jared Bosire, Goerge Mba (TBC)
15:30					



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2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
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15:30 –	Coffee Break & Networking	Informal discussions	-	-	-
16:00 –	16:00	Closing Plenary	Summary, way forward, and funding opportunities	-	Dr Arthur Tuda, <i>Executive Director of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association</i>
17:30 –	17:30				Dr Peggy Oti-Boateng <i>Executive Director at the African Academy of Sciences</i>
					Dr Ahmed Khan, <i>Chief Fisheries Officer and Coordinator of the Blue Economy</i>
					Laurent Bernadou, <i>Belmont Forum Secretariat</i>
					Prof. Sias Mostert, CEO, <i>Space Commercial Services, Stellenbosch, South Africa</i>
					Dr Philip James, <i>Director Centre for Sustainable Development Reform, University of New South Wales, Australia</i>
17:30 –	17:30	Networking Reception	Closing and informal engagement	-	-
19:00					