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**Seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention for the Protection,
Management and Development of the
Marine and Coastal Environment
of the West and Central African Region**
Libreville, 22 and 23 March 2005

**Report of the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties to the
Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the
Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African
Region***

* NB: The acronym WACAF has been changed to WAF in some documents in order to reflect the inclusion of the Republic of South Africa that ratified the Convention in 2002.

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Introduction

1. The seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention) was held at the Intercontinental Hotel in Libreville, Gabon, on Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 March 2005. The meeting had two segments: an Expert Group meeting on 22 March and a heads of delegation meeting on 23 March. The Abidjan Convention and its Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution in Cases of Emergency (Emergency Protocol) constitute the legal component of the West and Central African (WACAF) Action Plan. The Convention expresses the legal commitment of the Governments of the WACAF region (which extends from Mauritania to South Africa) to dealing individually and jointly with common marine and coastal environmental problems. The Emergency Protocol was designed with a view to combating and operationally responding to marine pollution in the event of emergencies.
2. The Abidjan Convention was adopted by countries of the region in 1981 and entered into force on 5 August 1984. The implementation of the Action Plan and the Protocol associated with the Convention has been slow and staggered because of a lack of funds and irregular contributions to the Convention trust fund. The interest and commitment of Contracting Parties has been growing, however, as a result of the 2003–2004 campaign by Ms. Angèle Gnonsoa, Minister for the Environment of Côte d'Ivoire, outgoing Chair of the Convention Bureau and Chair of the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties.
3. At its twenty-first session, held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 February 2001, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) adopted two decisions which provide the legal framework for strengthening the Abidjan Convention: decision 21/15 on support to Africa and decision 21/28 on the further development and strengthening of regional seas programmes: promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment, building partnerships and establishing linkages with multilateral environmental agreements.

I. Expert Group meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

4. The Expert Group meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 22 March 2005. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Elik Adler, Coordinator of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, Ms. Gnonsoa and Mr. Emile Doumba, Minister for Forestry, Water, Fisheries, Environment and the Protection of Nature of Gabon.
5. The Expert Group meeting was attended by over 68 participants, including representatives of 14 signatory countries. The list of participants is set forth in annex I to the present report (participants marked EM).
6. In his opening statement, Mr. Adler, on behalf of Mr. Klaus Töpfer, the Executive Director of UNEP, welcomed the participants and thanked them for accepting the invitation to participate in the meeting. After highlighting the importance of coordination between the Abidjan Convention and NEPAD, he acknowledged that the Abidjan Convention work programme outlined for 2005–2007 was ambitious and that the successful implementation of the work programme required political will and the payment of pledged contributions to the Convention.
7. Ms. Gnonsoa thanked the participants for their presence and the Government of Gabon for hosting the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties. She also thanked the Executive Director of UNEP for initiatives taken to strengthen the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention, and SIDA for its financial aid to the Convention.

8. Recalling the commitment to the Abidjan Convention made by member States at the ministerial conference on resource mobilization mechanisms for the implementation of the Action Plan for the NEPAD Environment Initiative, held in Dakar in October 2004, she confirmed the role of the Abidjan Convention as the regional platform for integrated management of marine and coastal resources. She highlighted the importance of strengthening the coordination mechanism, securing the payment by Contracting Parties of pledged contributions and ensuring the ratification of the Convention by all signatories. The text of Ms. Gnonsoa's statement is reproduced in part 1 of annex II to the present report.

9. Mr. Doumba, on behalf of Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon, thanked the partner institutions of the Convention for choosing Gabon as the venue for the meeting and welcomed the participants to Libreville.

10. He highlighted the role of the Abidjan Convention in the management of the marine and coastal environment of the West Africa region and the importance of coordination with the Action Plan for the NEPAD Environment Initiative. After outlining the main items on the meeting agenda, he wished the participants every success in their work and declared the Expert Group meeting open. The text of Mr. Doumba's statement is reproduced in part 2 of annex II to the present report.

B. Organizational matters

1. Election of officers

11. A representative of the secretariat suggested that the Bureau of the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties should also serve as Bureau for the Expert Group meeting, with the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire serving as Chair and those of Gabon and Cameroon as Rapporteurs. The representative of Gabon was invited to co-chair the meeting. In the opening session, Ms. Gnonsoa and Mr. Niagne Martin Dibi represented Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Rodrigue Abourou Otogo represented Gabon and Mr. Victor Nkwanyuo Mbai represented Cameroon.

2. Adoption of the agenda

12. The provisional agenda (UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/1) was adopted as amended. The agenda is reproduced as adopted in part 1 of annex III to the present report.

3. Organization of work

13. A drafting committee was established to consider a set of draft decisions (UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/4) to be submitted to the meeting of heads of delegation. The committee was composed of experts from Cameroon, Gabon, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa.

C. Status of projects and issues relating to the Abidjan Convention

1. Presentation on the contribution of Gabon to the objectives of the Abidjan Convention

14. Ms. Evelyne Solange Ndloulou Loubamono, Gabon focal point for the Abidjan Convention, gave a presentation on the contribution of Gabon to the objectives of the Abidjan Convention. She described the coastal and marine environment of Gabon and drew attention to other associated Conventions which Gabon had signed and Gabon's expectations with regard to the benefits of the sustainable development of its coastal and marine areas.

15. After providing an overview of policies for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of Gabon and the structure of national legislation and institutions, she described some projects relating to that environment and highlighted some of the activities directly associated with the Abidjan Convention, including the work of the Coastal Observatory on the collection of pollution data; the National Centre for Oceanographic Data and Information on the development of an environmental vulnerability atlas of the Gabonese coasts; the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) project; the Programme for Sanitation of Catchment Basins; the Survey of the Fauna and Flora in Marine Parks; and the Programme for the Conservation of and Research on Cetaceans.

16. The main constraints on the implementation of marine and coastal environmental protection in Gabon were outlined and coordination difficulties highlighted. Some potential partners in providing technical assistance were listed, including French and Belgian cooperation agencies, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), the Petroleum Union of Gabon (UPEGA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and UNEP. Certain actions to improve coordination in relation to the Abidjan Convention were suggested, such as consolidation of member-country experiences of implementation activities, identification of regional priorities for application to national projects, development of a charter for managing common projects and reinforcement of the capacity of the secretariat in terms of expertise and finance.

17. Ms. Ndloulou Loubamono also highlighted the importance of informing national focal points of all activities, updating the focal point databas, initiating discussion forums on issues relating to the Convention and supporting synergies between the Abidjan Convention and other conventions such as the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region (Nairobi Convention), the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention).

2. Report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Abidjan Convention area

18. Ms. Nassere Kaba, Regional Coordinator of the Abidjan Convention, presented a report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Abidjan Convention area based on 2004 reports from Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Senegal.

19. In her presentation, she described the status of each country with regard to international conventions relating to the marine and coastal environment, recent and current programmes and projects, and current gaps and deficiencies. Tangible measures were suggested for strengthening cooperation between the Abidjan Convention and existing programmes and projects. The text of the report is reproduced in annex IV to the present report.

3. Report on the state of the Benguela Current large marine ecosystem

20. Ms. Maria de Lourdes Sardinha, the Director of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) Activity Centre for Biodiversity, described the main transboundary problems facing the Benguela current area and presented an overview of institutional arrangements, agreed policies and actions, including strategic action programmes, and BCLME project updates.

21. The major transboundary problems facing the BCLME included a decline in commercial fisheries, uncertain ecosystem status and yield, inadequate capacity to assess ecosystems, deterioration in water quality, habitat destruction and alteration, loss of biological integrity and biodiversity and harmful algae blooms.

22. The main activities contained in the strategic action programmes were listed, including development of early warning systems, collection of baseline environmental data, improved predictability of extreme events, investigating the mechanisms and consequences of harmful algae blooms and climate change, joint surveys and assessments, harmonization of management of shared fish stocks, the FAO code of conduct for responsible fishing, assessment of non-exploited species, regional mariculture policy, fisheries conservation measures, training and capacity-building and management of pollution. Special emphasis was placed on strategic action plans relating to the management of mining and drilling.

23. The presentation on BCLME-related activities covered projects regarding pollution from seabed activities, pollution from land-based sources, specially protected areas and cooperation in combating pollution in the event of emergencies. The main partners in the BCLME project were introduced.

24. Mr. Neville Sweijd, Director of the Benguela Environment Fisheries Interaction and Training Research Programme (BENEFIT), gave a presentation on the organization and activities of BENEFIT, a marine research agency involving national institutions in Angola, Namibia and South Africa. The functioning and structure of BENEFIT was explained and examples were given of current research projects.

4. Report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Guinea Current large marine ecosystem

25. Mr. Chidi Ibe, Regional Director of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem (GCLME) project, presented a report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Guinea current area. He described the needs, results and major components of the GCLME project and also some GCLME demonstration projects.

26. The main transboundary environmental issues identified by a GCLME transboundary diagnostic analysis were declining fish stocks and unsustainable harvesting of living resources, uncertainty regarding ecosystem status, integrity and yields because the environment was highly variable, deterioration in water quality caused by land and sea-based activities and harmful algal blooms, and habitat destruction and alteration. As a consequence, the overall development goals were to allow depleted fish stocks to recover, restore degraded habitats, reduce land- and ship-based pollution and create an ecosystem-wide assessment and management framework for the sustainable use of living and non-living resources.

27. The major components of the GCLME project were to finalize strategic action plans and develop sustainable financing mechanisms for the project's implementation, to work for the recovery and sustainability of depleted fisheries and living marine resources, including mariculture, to plan for biodiversity conservation and restoration of degraded habitats, to develop strategies for reducing coastal erosion and also land- and sea-based pollution, and to improve regional coordination and institutional sustainability.

28. Some of the GCLME demonstration projects described were regional projects on trends in primary productivity and implications for the carrying capacity of the system, fish trawl surveys and stock assessments and the establishment of common environmental information management systems. Among the national projects mentioned were the creation of marine protected areas in Benin; the introduction of integrated coastal area management in Kribi, Cameroon; low-cost technology coastal defence measures in Côte d'Ivoire; the creation of a waste stock exchange management system in Ghana; *Nypa* palm clearance and mangrove reforestation in Nigeria; and the reduction of nutrient discharges in Togo.

5. Report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Canary Current large marine ecosystem

29. Ms. Marieme Diagne Talla, expert at the Direction des Pêches Maritimes, Senegal, gave a brief presentation on the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) project, outlining the geographic scope, organization and financing of the project. The current objectives of the project were to promote better understanding and management of the ecosystem among the countries involved; to support the subregional process; to establish a transboundary diagnostic analysis and strategic action plan; and to prepare a project document. Some of the programme components mentioned included the development of pilot projects for the implementation of the strategic action plan; strengthening management capacity; development of regional legal, political and regulatory frameworks; feasibility analysis; and the establishment of regional mechanisms for inter-agency coordination.

30. Mr. Andrew Cook, Regional Coordinator of the CCLME project, explained the large marine ecosystems concept and approach and described the strategy for the CCLME programme, including the process of developing transboundary diagnostic analyses and strategic action plans. Some of the main foreseen transboundary issues in the region were freshwater shortages, pollution, habitat and community modification, unsustainable fisheries and global climate change. The CCLME region was currently battling problems with overexploited fisheries, especially demersal fisheries; ecosystem transformation; coastal pollution in relation to urban development; and altered river flows.

6. Regional Programme for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Resources in West Africa (PRCM): Report on the objectives, issues, constraints, opportunities and cooperation between the six member countries (from Mauritania to Guinea)

31. Mr. Ibrahima Niamadio of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) presented a report on the Regional Programme for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Resources in West Africa: its objectives, issues, constraints, opportunities and cooperation between six member states (from Mauritania to Guinea).

32. A brief history of the Programme, detailing the creation of a common programme, was presented. The Programme involved 47 institutions from the six participating countries and networks dealing with issues such as protected areas and coastal planning. The main components of the current five-year programme included the support, creation and co-management of marine protected areas, the conservation and management of species and habitats and the contribution of marine protected areas to the development of eco-tourism.

7. Presentation on the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP)

33. Ms. Lynette Jackson gave an overview of the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), outlining its organization and initiatives in the Abidjan and Nairobi convention areas. The impacts of invasive alien species on ecology, economy and health were detailed, as were the vectors for the transfer of marine species. Some of the new international initiatives relating to GISP were introduced, including a joint work programme of GISP, UNEP, the Regional Seas conventions and the Convention on Biological Diversity; development of training courses in pilot areas by GISP and UNEP-Regional Seas; phase II of the Global Ballast Water Management (GloBallast) programme introduced by UNDP, IMO and the Global Environment Facility; the development within FAO of new guidelines on invasive species; and the identification of invasive species as a priority under NEPAD.

34. An overview was provided of the initiatives currently being carried out in the Abidjan Convention region, which included limited participation in the GloBallast programme; listing of introduced species as a priority for the BCLME project; and a project on *Nypa* palm clearance in mangroves under the GCLME project. The main recommendation from GISP was to include activities on marine and coastal invasive species in the work programme of the Abidjan Convention.

8. Presentation of the work programme for the Abidjan Convention 2005–2007

35. Mr. Jacques Abe presented the work programme for the Abidjan Convention 2005–2007 (UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/6), which had been developed during the focal points forum held in Accra in November 2004. The work programme is reproduced in annex V to the present report.

D. Adoption of Expert Group decisions

36. The draft decisions were presented to the Expert Group meeting by the drafting group, discussed and further amended to reflect the views of the meeting, with recommendations for the heads of delegation meeting.

II. Heads of delegation meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

37. The heads of delegation meeting was opened on Wednesday, 23 March 2005 by Mr. Emmanuel Ondo Methogo, Deputy Prime Minister of Gabon. Opening statements were made by Mr. Adler, Coordinator of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, Ms. Gnonsoa, Minister for the Environment of Côte d'Ivoire and Chair of the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties, and Mr. Doumba, Minister for Forestry, Water, Fisheries, Environment and the Protection of Nature of Gabon. The meeting was attended by representatives of 14 of the signatory countries to the Convention and 15 experts. A complete list of participants at the heads of delegation meeting is set out in annex I to the present report (marked HDM).

38. In his opening statement, Mr. Adler, speaking on behalf of Mr. Töpfer, the Executive Director of UNEP, welcomed the participants and thanked them for accepting the invitation to participate in the meeting. He emphasized the coordinating role of the Abidjan Convention in a region with differing governance structures, political, social and economic variations and an increasing number of environmentally related national, regional and international initiatives, programmes and projects on the marine and coastal environment. Also, the Convention should act as a channel for the implementation of the Action Plan for the NEPAD Environment Initiative.

39. Mr. Adler briefly reported on the implementation of decisions adopted at the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties, including missions to urge countries to accede to and ratify the Convention, and to mobilize contributions to the trust fund. He acknowledged that the Abidjan Convention work programme outlined for 2005–2007 was ambitious and stressed that its implementation would depend mainly on the input from participating countries and would require a renewed commitment from Governments, a sustainable financing mechanism and a strong and effective coordination mechanism.

40. He renewed the commitment of UNEP to the Abidjan Convention and its Contracting Parties, thanked the secretariat for its work and expressed gratitude to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Government and the people of Gabon for hosting the meeting. The text of Mr. Adler's statement is reproduced in part 1 of annex VI to the present report.

41. Ms. Gnonsoa thanked the participants for their presence, UNEP and the Convention secretariat for their support and arrangements for the meeting, and the national focal points and the Regional Coordinating Unit for the preparatory work. She also expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Gabon for hosting the meeting, and to SIDA for its financial aid to the Abidjan Convention.

42. She gave a historical account of the difficulties which the Abidjan Convention had faced and described how, in recent years, the Convention had been revitalized, highlighting the ratification by Benin and South Africa as symbols of renewed commitment. She underlined the importance of financial contributions from the Contracting Parties to the Convention and the good examples set by Gambia, Senegal and South Africa, who had fulfilled their financial obligations to the Convention. The coordination mechanism of the Convention had been reinforced with the designation of national focal points for all Contracting Parties at the forum held in Accra in November 2004. Stressing the importance of giving the focal points the necessary means to facilitate communication between UNEP, the Regional Coordinating Unit and the national administrations and institutions in order to promote Convention activities, she asked for the assistance of UNEP in reinforcing the national focal points and the Regional Coordinating Unit.

43. The coordinating role of the Convention was emphasized, as was the importance of establishing new partnerships with international organizations such as IMO, UNIDO and WWF and of adopting adequate strategies to involve national institutions in the regional programmes for sustainable management of the marine environment and coastal areas. She urged the Contracting Parties to assume their responsibility in promoting dynamic collaboration in safeguarding their coastal zones and expressed the hope that the Convention would be implemented successfully with tangible results. A text of her statement is reproduced in part 2 of annex VI to the present report.

44. In a statement read out in the presence of and on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister of Gabon, Mr. Doumba welcomed the participants to Libreville on behalf of the President, the Government and the Prime Minister of Gabon. He gave an overview of the role of the Abidjan Convention and the relationship between the Convention and NEPAD, emphasizing the need for a strong, revitalized legal instrument. He urged the countries which had not yet ratified the Convention to do so, and wished the participants success in their work. The text of his full statement may be found in part 3 of annex VI to the present report.

B. Election of officers

45. Gabon, represented by Mr. Doumba, was elected Chair of the heads of delegation segment and Chair of the Bureau of the Abidjan Convention, and it was agreed that he would remain Chair for the period 2005 to 2007. Other elected officers for 2005 to 2007 were:

South Africa	Vice-Chair responsible for the work programme
Cameroon	Vice-Chair responsible for resource mobilization
Ghana	Coordination with the Nairobi Convention
Senegal	Coordination with NEPAD
Côte d'Ivoire	Coordination with UNEP
Nigeria, Togo and Democratic Republic of the Congo	Rapporteurs

C. Adoption of the agenda

46. The provisional agenda (UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/1) was adopted as amended. The agenda as amended is set forth in part 2 of annex III to the present report.

D. Report of the Executive Director of UNEP

1. Status report of the Executive Director of UNEP

47. Mr. Dixon Waruinge, Programme Officer of the Joint Secretariat for the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions, presented a status report by the Executive Director of UNEP (UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/2). He gave a brief historical review of the Abidjan Convention and outlined some of the recent achievements and the main points of the work programme. He emphasized that the work programme took into consideration the need for a renewed commitment from Governments, a sustainable financing mechanism and a strong and effective coordination mechanism, and gave a brief summary of the current financial status of the Convention. The Executive Director's report is reproduced in annex VII to the present report.

2. Presentation of draft terms of reference for the Abidjan Convention Focal Points

48. Ms. Nassere Kaba, Regional Coordinator of the Abidjan Convention, presented the draft terms of reference for the Abidjan Convention focal points (UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.7/5), which had been developed at the focal points forum held in Accra in November 2004. The terms of reference are reproduced in annex VIII to the present report.

3. Presentation of the work programme for the Abidjan Convention

49. A representative of the secretariat presented the work programme for the Abidjan Convention (UNEP(DEC)WAF/CP.7/6) which had been developed during the focal points forum held in Accra. The work programme for the Abidjan Convention 2005–2007 is set forth in annex V to the present report.

4. Financial report

50. A representative of the secretariat presented the financial report of the Abidjan Convention, giving the status of the Trust Fund for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the West and Central African Region (WAL Trust Fund) (see table 1) and the status of assessed contributions as at 31 August 1991, which was still the basis of contributions for the period 2005 to 2007 (see table 2). Participants were reminded of the decision taken at the fifth meeting of the Contracting Parties which called for contributions based on the 1991 pledges as each country's current assessed contribution.

Year	Amount
1982	42,956
1983	63,385
1984	236,982
1985	539,261
1986	396,349
1987	310,540
1988	190,820
1989	683,015
1990	544,933
1991	735,858
1992	677,714
1993	692,744
1994	606,234
1995	429,124
1996	221,266
1997	78,973
1998	78,808
1999	98,538
2000	95,511
2001	97,580
2002	81,369
2003	95,090
2004	87,028
2005*	72,548

* Allocations

Country	Amount
Angola	37,200
Benin	37,200
Cameroon	37,200
Cape Verde	37,200
Congo	37,200
Côte d'Ivoire	61,600
DRC	49,400
Equatorial Guinea	37,200
Gabon	49,400
Gambia	37,200
Ghana	61,600
Guinea	37,200
Guinea-Bissau	37,200
Liberia	37,200
Mauritania	37,200
Nigeria	220,100
São Tomé and Príncipe	37,200
Senegal	37,200
Sierra Leone	37,200
Togo	37,200
TOTAL	1,000,100

E. Statements by representatives of Contracting Parties and observers

51. Representatives made statements which reflected the positions of their countries and their commitment to the Abidjan Convention.
52. Ms. Mabudafhasi, Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa, proposed the holding of a joint meeting of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions. South Africa would favourably consider hosting the eighth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention in conjunction with the fifth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention. She also proposed a change in the name and geographical scope of the Convention to reflect the fact that Southern African countries such as South Africa had become Parties to the Convention. The full text of her statement is reproduced in part 4 of annex VI to the present report.
53. Mr. Fada, Minister for the Environment and the Protection of Nature of Senegal, gave an overview of projects and programmes relating to the marine and coastal environment which were currently being undertaken in Senegal and emphasized the role of the Abidjan Convention in assuring their implementation. The full text of his statement is reproduced in part 5 of annex VI to the present report.
54. Mr. Enerunga, Minister of Environment, the Conservation of Nature, Waters and Forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, reaffirmed his country's support to the Convention and informed the meeting that the process of ratification was under way there. He expressed support for strengthening regional coordination and management and developing a financing mechanism which would provide the Convention with the means to play its important role in supporting sustainable development. The text of his statement is reproduced in part 6 of annex VI.
55. Mr. Barro Chambrier, Deputy Minister of Forestry, Water, Fisheries, the Environment and the protection of Nature of Gabon, thanked the Contracting Parties for electing Gabon as Chair and paid tribute to Ms. Gnonsoa, the outgoing Chair, for her achievements over the previous two years. He underlined the importance of ratification and urged all countries to pay their contributions to the Convention. The text of his statement is reproduced in part 7 of annex VI to the present report.
56. Mr. Hele, Minister for Environment and Forestry of Cameroon, gave an overview of how Cameroon was combating threats to its coastal and marine environment and assured the meeting that Cameroon's contributions to the Abidjan Convention trust fund would be paid promptly. The text of his statement is given in full in part 8 of annex VI to the present report.
57. Ms. Churcher, Minister for Environment, Science and Technology of Ghana, noted the importance of a total commitment from all Governments and partners to implement the work programme and to achieve desired results within the targets which had been set. The text of her statement is reproduced in part 9 of annex VI to the present report.
58. Mr. Pascal Yaha, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Environment, Habitat and Urban Planning of Benin, speaking on behalf of the Minister, urged all Parties to be conscious of their national responsibilities when acting to support programmes and projects related to the Abidjan Convention. The text of his statement is reproduced in part 10 of annex VI to the present report.
59. Ms. Mery Yaou, Research Officer of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry Resources of Togo, launched an urgent appeal to all countries in the region to make a commitment to the Abidjan Convention and to honour that commitment. The text of her statement is reproduced in part 11 of annex VI to the present report.
60. Mr Akin Awobamise, Zonal Director of the Federal Ministry of the Environment of Nigeria, delivered a goodwill message from the Minister of Environment of Nigeria, renewing Nigeria's full commitment to the Abidjan Convention. He also informed the meeting that, as soon as budgetary exercises had been completed, Nigeria would aim to make its contribution to the Convention Trust Fund. The text of his statement is reproduced in part 12 of annex VI to the present report.
61. Mr. Mamady Conde, Director of the Cabinet of the Ministry of the Environment of Guinea, presented greetings from the Minister for the Environment of Guinea, on whose behalf he assured Guinea's support to the revitalization of the Abidjan Convention. The text of his statement is reproduced in part 13 of annex VI to the present report.

62. Mr Saikou Njai, Senior Programme Officer of Environmental Quality of Gambia, extended the apologies of the Secretary of State for Fisheries, Natural Resources and the Environment of Gambia for his absence, and urged the Contracting Parties to make every effort to ensure that the Convention would be revitalized and its work programme implemented. The text of the statement is reproduced in part 14 of annex VI to the present report.

63. Mr Staffan Larsson, the representative of SIDA and the Swedish National Board of Fisheries, made a statement in which he thanked Gabon for its warm welcome and gave an overview of the support provided by SIDA to marine and coastal initiatives in the region. He emphasized that the main focus of the support was to support processes rather than projects and that part of the support had been given as seed money to strengthen the Abidjan Convention. It was important to promote active involvement and additional financial support from the member countries. SIDA was also providing support to the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF).

F. Adoption of decisions

64. The decisions presented to the Expert Group meeting by the drafting committee were presented for discussion and adoption at the heads of delegation meeting. The final decisions, as adopted, are set forth in annex IX to the present report.

G. Venue of the eighth meeting

65. South Africa offered to host the eighth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, if possible in conjunction with the fifth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention. The eighth meeting of the Contracting Parties was expected to be held in 2007, the date to be confirmed after consultations between UNEP, the Bureau and the delegation of South Africa.

H. Other matters

66. Ms. Churcher, Minister for Environment, Science and Technology of Ghana, made a brief statement on a concept note which had been developed by the Abidjan Convention secretariat for submission to GEF regarding a medium-sized project on environmentally sound technologies for waste and wastewater treatment as accessible tools in integrated ecosystem management. The project would be implemented in five pilot countries: Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal. She requested the Contracting Parties to encourage the secretariat in its endeavours to complete the preparations and submit the project proposal to GEF as soon as possible and to develop the project further to cover all the countries within the Convention area in the near future. She emphasized that Ghana viewed the project as complementary to the goals and objectives of the GCLME project.

I. Closure of the meeting

67. Mr. Fada, Minister for the Environment and the Protection of Nature of Senegal, extended the gratitude of the participants to the President, Government and people of Gabon for their hospitality and for hosting the meeting. The full text of the vote of thanks is set forth in part 15 of annex VI to the present report.

68. The heads of delegation meeting of the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region was closed at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 March 2005, by Mr. Doumba, Minister for Forestry, Water, Fisheries, Environment and the Protection of Nature of Gabon and Chair of the Bureau of the Abidjan Convention. The text of his closing statement is set forth in part 16 of annex VI to the present report.

Annex I

List of participants

EM = Present at the Expert Group meeting

HDM = Present at the heads of delegation meeting

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Annex II

Statements made at the Expert Group meeting

1. Côte d'Ivoire

Allocution de la Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de l'Environnement, Hon. Angèle Gnonsoa, à la Réunion du Group d'Experts

- Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chers Collègues,
- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, Monsieur le Représentant du Directeur Exécutif du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement,
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des Organisations bilatérales et multilatérales,
- Distingués Experts,
- Honorables invités,
- Mesdames et Messieurs

En ma qualité de Présidente de la Sixième Réunion des Parties, je souhaiterais vous remercier d'être venus si nombreux ce matin pour donner une note spéciale à la convention d'Abidjan qui cherche à prendre le large.

Permettez-moi de saisir l'occasion qui m'est offerte pour exprimer ma gratitude toute particulière au gouvernement gabonais pour le chaleureux accueil dont il a fait preuve à mon égard et à toutes les délégations présentes à cette importante rencontre, et d'avoir accepté d'accueillir cette 7ème réunion dont l'objectif est de renforcer la coopération régionale pour la protection, la gestion et la mise en valeur du milieu marin qui sont des éléments importants de notre environnement.

Permettez-moi également de remercier tout particulièrement M. Klaus Töpfer, le Directeur Exécutif du PNUE pour l'énergie qu'il dépense à la tête de son organisation.

C'est grâce aux débats qui ont lieu sous son égide et aux initiatives prises par le PNUE que nous pouvons aujourd'hui être témoins de la renaissance de cet instrument qu'est la Convention d'Abidjan.

J'associe à ces remerciements appuyés, l'Agence Suédoise de Coopération Internationale (SIDA), pour l'aide substantielle qu'elle a bien voulu fournir dans le but de soutenir la Convention d'Abidjan et son mécanisme de coordination.

Distingués experts,

Nous avons entamé la revitalisation de notre convention depuis 1998. A cet égard des acquis importants sont à relever dont l'adoption du processus africain pour le développement et la protection de l'environnement marin et côtier en Afrique subsaharienne, la prise en compte de nos préoccupations, sous l'impulsion de la Convention d'Abidjan, par le NEPAD à travers sa sous composante sur l'environnement marin et côtier.

Il faut le rappeler qu'à la Conférence Ministérielle sur le Mécanisme de Mobilisation de Ressources pour la Mise en Œuvre du Plan d'Action de l'Initiative Environnement du NEPAD, tenue à Dakar du 12 au 14 octobre 2004, et à la 2ème Conférence des Partenaires sur la mise en œuvre du Plan d'Action de l'Initiative Environnement du NEPAD, tenue aussi à Dakar les 15 et 16 mars 2005, les pays participants ont réaffirmé leur engagement pour la Convention d'Abidjan qui a été reconnue comme une plate-forme régionale dans le domaine de la gestion intégrée des ressources marines et côtières.

Il importe aujourd'hui de consolider ces acquis, c'est pourquoi je me réjouis qu'un tel aréopage d'experts soit mobilisé pour adopter un programme de travail du biennal 2005-2007.

Les pistes de réflexions sont variées mais il me semble important d'appeler votre auguste attention sur les moyens à mettre en place pour renforcer la coordination de nos actions en nous appuyant sur les compétences de l'unité régionale de coordination. Evidemment une bonne coordination ne saurait s'établir en l'absence d'un engagement des points focaux et de l'entière implication des structures régionales des Grands Ecosystèmes Marins (GEM) de notre Région dont l'expérience et le dynamisme sont des atouts inestimables.

Par ailleurs, pérenniser les financements demeure un défi majeur que nous sommes tous appelés à relever, j'exhorte chacun de nous à imaginer les solutions idoines pour garantir des financements durables de nos activités. Certes, en cette période de restriction budgétaire généralisée la tâche paraît difficile mais je demeure persuadée que de vos discussions émergeront les propositions adéquates pour garantir la durabilité des financements.

Enfin Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je ne saurais terminer mon propos sans aborder l'important sujet de la ratification de notre convention. En effet, l'adhésion récente du Bénin et de l'Afrique du Sud traduit le succès croissant de notre instrument de gestion durable de l'environnement côtier.

Cependant telle une chaîne, l'efficacité des mesures que nous pourrions prendre serait amoindrie si tous les pays qui partagent le même Grand Ecosystème Marin n'adhèrent pas à la convention. Pour ce faire, vos suggestions pour mieux faire connaître la convention et susciter l'adhésion de tous les pays couverts sont de mise.

Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts,

Il reste convaincue que les conclusions auxquelles aboutiront vos travaux aujourd'hui, constitueront une bonne base de départ pour les débats qui auront lieu demain au cours de la réunion des ministres.

Mesdames et Messieurs, Chers Experts,

Je souhaite plein succès à vos travaux et tout en vous remerciant de votre attention, je déclare ouverte la réunion des experts sur la convention d'Abidjan.

Je vous remercie.

2. Gabon

Allocution d'ouverture du Ministre de l'environnement du Gabon, Hon. Emile Doumba à la Réunion du Groupe d'Experts:

- Monsieur le Représentant du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants du Corps Diplomatique
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des Organisations Internationales et Partenaires au Développement
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts
- Distingués invités
- Mesdames et Messieurs

Il m'est particulièrement agréable de présider aujourd'hui la cérémonie d'ouverture de la réunion des Experts de la septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan sur la Coopération en matière de protection et de développement de l'environnement marin et côtier de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Je voudrais, au nom de Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat, remercier les institutions partenaires, notamment le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement et le Secrétariat de la Convention, d'avoir choisi le Gabon pour abriter cette importante rencontre internationale.

Aussi, me plait-il de souhaiter la plus cordiale des bienvenues et un agréable séjour en terre gabonaise à tous ceux qui ont fait le déplacement de Libreville.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

La Septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan qui s'ouvre ce jour doit être l'occasion de poursuivre notre réflexion sur les enjeux et les problématiques de la sauvegarde et de la gestion durable de nos écosystèmes marins et côtiers.

Comme vous le savez, la Convention d'Abidjan, signée en 1984, couvre plus de 14.000 kms de côtes entre la Mauritanie et l'Afrique du Sud; elle concerne 22 pays et intègre 3 écosystèmes distincts: le Grand Ecosystème Marin du Courant du Canari au Nord, le Grand Ecosystème Marin du Courant de Benguela au Sud et le Grand Ecosystème Marin du Courant de Guinée au Centre.

La forte concentration des populations dans la frange littorale a favorisé le développement d'activités industrielles, commerciales et touristiques; elle a aussi engendré d'importantes pressions sur les équilibres des écosystèmes naturels.

C'est dans ce contexte que le plan d'action de la Convention d'Abidjan a prévu des mesures de prévention et de réduction de l'érosion côtière et le renforcement de la coopération en matière de gestion des situations critiques et de lutte contre les pollutions.

Ainsi, les projets élaborés pour couvrir les trois grands écosystèmes précités traduisent ces orientations.

Dans la même perspective, la Conférence des Ministres sur le Plan d'Action Environnemental du NEPAD a retenu la Convention d'Abidjan pour coordonner la mise en œuvre de projets dans les domaines marin et côtier.

Enfin, il vous souviendra que dans son allocution au deuxième Sommet des Chefs d'Etat de la COMIFAC, organisé à Brazzaville en février 2005, le Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat, Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, a invité la communauté internationale à appuyer nos Etats dans la gestion des pollutions et la lutte contre les délestages sauvages dans nos eaux marines et continentales.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts,

L'ordre du jour de vos travaux comportera les points suivants:

1. la présentation de l'état de l'environnement marin et côtier de la zone de la Convention d'Abidjan et de chacun des 3 écosystèmes marins considérés;
2. l'examen et la validation du Programme de Travail de la Convention d'Abidjan pour la période 2005-2007 qui prend en considération les besoins essentiels ci-après:
 - besoin de réaffirmation de l'engagement des gouvernements ;
 - besoin d'un mécanisme de financement durable ;
 - besoin d'un mécanisme de coordination fort et efficace ;
3. l'élaboration et l'adoption des recommandations à soumettre au segment ministériel.

Connaissant votre expertise avérée et votre grande maîtrise de ces dossiers, je suis assuré de la qualité et de la pertinence des recommandations que vous porterez à l'attention des Ministres et qui leur permettront de prendre un engagement fort afin de consolider le mouvement de redynamisation de la Convention d'Abidjan.

Il me reste à souhaiter plein succès à vos travaux.

Je déclare ouverte la réunion des Experts de la septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan sur la Coopération en matière de protection et de développement de l'environnement marin et côtier de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Vive la Convention d'Abidjan.

Vive la Coopération Internationale.

Je vous remercie.

Annex III

Agenda of the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention

1. Expert Group meeting

22 March 2005

1. Opening of the meeting:
 - (a) Statement by a representative of the UNEP secretariat;
 - (b) Statement by the outgoing Chair of the Abidjan Convention;
 - (c) Statement by a representative of the host Government.
2. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Status of projects and issues relating to the Abidjan Convention:
 - (a) Presentation of the contribution of Gabon to the objectives of the Abidjan Convention;
 - (b) Report on the state of the Marine and Coastal Environment in the Abidjan Convention area;
 - (c) Report on the state of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem;
 - (d) Report on the state of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem;
 - (e) Report on the state of the Marine and Coastal Environment in the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem;
 - (f) Report on the PRCM objectives, issues, constraints, opportunities and cooperation between six member countries (from Mauritania to Guinea);
 - (g) Presentation of the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP);
 - (h) Presentation of the work programme for the Abidjan Convention 2005–2007.
4. Adoption of Expert Group decisions.

2. Heads of delegation meeting

23 March 2005

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers for the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Report of the Executive Director of UNEP:
 - (a) Status report by the UNEP Executive Director;
 - (b) Presentation of draft terms of reference for the Abidjan Convention focal points;
 - (c) Presentation of the work programme for the Abidjan Convention;
 - (d) Financial report.
5. Statements by representatives of Contracting Parties and observers.
6. Adoption of decisions.
7. Venue of the eighth meeting.
8. Other matters.
9. Closure of the meeting.

Annex IV

Report on the state of the marine and coastal environment in the Abidjan Convention area

Rapport élaboré sur la base des documents pour 2004 des pays suivants: Bénin, Cameroun, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinée, Nigeria, DRC et Sénégal.

Conventions Internationales

CONVENTIONS	Bénin	Cameroun	Congo RD	Congo	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Guinée	Nigeria	Sénégal
Changements climatiques									
Protection de la couche d'ozone 1989									
Désertification									
Diversité biologique									
POPs									
Rotterdam									
Bâle et de Bamako									
Droit de la Mer 1982									
OPRC - Préparation, coopération en matière de lutte contre la pollution par les hydrocarbures									
FIPOI 92 Fonds d'indemnisation sur les pollutions marines.									
MARPOL 73-78									
Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water: 5 th August 1963									
International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas: 4 May 1966									
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitats: 2 February 1971, RAMSAR									
International Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties									
Treaty and Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof: 11 January 1971									

Programmes et projets recensés dans les pays

1. Renforcement des capacités institutionnelles réglementaires et techniques pour la gestion intégrée de la zone côtière;
2. Lutte contre l'érosion côtière;
3. Surveillance de la qualité des eaux et lutte contre la pollution industrielle;
4. Protection des zones humides;
5. Réhabilitation des mangroves;
6. Sauvegarde de la biodiversité;
7. Exploitation durable des ressources;
8. Projet de lutte contre la pollution de l'eau et la conservation de la biodiversité dans le Grand Ecosystème Marin du Courant de Guinée (GC-LME);
9. Plan d'urgence de lutte contre les pollutions accidentelles par les hydrocarbures.

Autres activités spécifiques

Bénin

- Gestion des déchets solides et eaux vannes de Cotonou et Porto Novo ;
- Projets et programmes en matière de pêche continentale et marine;
- Projet flore du Bénin;
- Programme amélioration génétique et technologique alimentaire de l'INRAB.

R. D. Congo

- Projet ZAI/95/G31/Activités Habilitantes en RDC sur les changements climatiques;
- Le projet d'inventaire des PCBs (polychlorobiphényles) de la SADC.

Côte d'Ivoire

- Création de Centre d'Enfouissement Technique (CET);
- Gestion de l'Environnement littoral;
- Interaction Océan climat;
- Flux continentaux particuliers et dissous des fleuves;
- Dynamique sédimentaire littorale et mouvement des embouchures;
- Ressources hauturières/ Bio- écologie des thonidés et espèces voisines de l'atlantique tropical;
- Ressources hauturières/ Observatoire thonier;
- Exploitation rationnelle des ressources marines côtières / pêche artisanale et industrielle;
- Exploitation rationnelle des ressources marines côtières: production et évaluation des stocks de ressources démersales.

Ghana

- Fisheries Sub-sector Capacity Building Project;
- Establishment of a Protected Wetland Ecosystem on the coast;
- Monitoring of fish stock levels and associated oceanographic parameters;
- Institution of a programme of Monitoring, Compliance and Surveillance of the marine environment;
- Development of industrial pollution standards;
- Increased public education on sound coastal and marine environmental practices.

Guinée

- Programme de gestion intégrée des ressources marines et côtières et protection de la biodiversité;
- Projet d'aire marine protégée «Iles Tristao».

Nigeria

- Development of ECOWAS Dumpwatch programme;
- Management/Harvesting of water Hyacinth in coastal water ways;
- Clearance/Removal of oil tar balls from beaches;
- Aquaculture and fisheries resources development.

Sénégal

- Projet de dépollution industrielle de la baie de Hann.

Mesures concrètes en faveur de la coopération entre la Convention d'Abidjan et ces programmes ou projets en cours

1. L'Unité de Coordination de la Convention doit coopérer directement avec les secrétariats respectifs des diverses Conventions Internationales dans la recherche des ressources financières au profit des programmes régionaux de la Convention d'Abidjan;
2. Le RCU devrait archiver les différents rapports finaux des projets exécutés;
3. L'Unité de Coordination doit prendre les dispositions nécessaires pour participer aux différents ateliers de lancement ou de restitution des travaux et aux réunions bilans de ces programmes;
4. Il est souhaitable d'organiser des ateliers d'information et de sensibilisation auprès des responsables des structures techniques sur les objectifs de la convention;
5. Amener les pays à ratifier la Convention d'Abidjan;
6. Rechercher les voies et moyens pour le paiement effectif des contributions des Etats au Fonds d'Affectation Spécial;
7. Présenter une structuration claire de l'UCR et mettre en place un fonctionnement adéquat;
8. Renforcer les capacités de l'UCR;
9. Assister les pays dans la mise en oeuvre du plan d'action de la convention.

Insuffisances au niveau des Etats

Lacunes	Bénin	Cameroun	Congo RD	Congo	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Guinée	Nigeria	Sénégal
Manque de collaboration entre les différents projets et programmes nationaux									
Pauvreté de la population									
Faible sensibilisation des populations locales									
Manque d'équipements des points focaux nationaux									
Insuffisance de communication entre le RCU et les points focaux									
Inexistence du budget alloué aux activités									
Inadéquation du cadre institutionnel national									
Manque de coordination entre différents ministères intervenant dans la protection de l'environnement marin et côtier									
Inadéquation des textes réglementaires									

Autres programmes/projets spécifiques

Bénin	Congo RD	Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Guinée	Nigeria	Sénégal
<p>Gestion des déchets solides et eaux vannes de Cotonou et Porto Novo</p> <p>Projets et programmes en matière de pêche continentale et marine ;</p> <p>Projet flore du Bénin ;</p> <p>Programme amélioration génétique et technologique alimentaire de l'INRAB ;</p>	<p>PROJET ZAI/95/G31/ACTIVITES HABILITANTES EN RDC sur les changements climatiques ;</p> <p>Le projet d'inventaire des PCBs (polychlorobiphényles) de la SADC.</p>	<p>Création de Centre d'Enfouissement Technique (CET)</p> <p>Gestion de l'Environnement littoral en Côte d'Ivoire</p> <p>Interaction Océan-climat</p> <p>Flux continentaux particuliers et dissous des fleuves de Côte d'Ivoire ;</p> <p>Ressources hauturières/ Observatoire thonier</p> <p>Exploitation rationnelle des ressources marines côtières.</p>	<p>Fisheries Sub-sector Capacity Building Project</p> <p>Establishment of a Protected Wetland</p> <p>Ecosystem on the coast</p> <p>Monitoring of fish stock levels and associated oceanographic parameters</p> <p>Institution of a programme of Monitoring, Compliance and Surveillance of the marine environment</p> <p>Development of industrial pollution standards</p> <p>Increased public education on sound coastal and marine environmental practices</p>	<p>Programme de gestion intégrée des ressources marines et côtières et protection de la biodiversité.</p> <p>Projet d'aire marine protégée« Iles Tristao».</p>	<p>Development of ECOWAS Dumpwatch programme;</p> <p>Management/Harvesting of water Hyacinth in coastal waterways;</p> <p>Clearance/Removal of oil tar balls from beaches;</p> <p>Aquaculture and fisheries resources development.</p>	<p>Projet de dépollution industrielle de la baie de Hann.</p>

Annex V

Work programme for the Abidjan Convention 2005–2007

Background

There is consensus that the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region needs to go through a review process which will develop new structures for coordination and management to overcome serious problems which prevent the Convention's normal development and evolution.

Preamble

Abidjan Convention in a global context

The Abidjan Convention is one of the 17 Regional Seas convention and action plans that bring together over 150 coastal States and territories. In Africa all coastal African nations participate in a Regional Seas Programme, namely; the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) under the Barcelona Convention (1976): Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Algeria; The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, under the Jeddah Convention (1982): Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea; the Eastern African Action Plan under the Nairobi Convention (1985): Comoros, France (La Réunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania; and the West and Central African Action Plan (WACAF) under the Abidjan Convention of (1981): 21 African states from Mauritania to South Africa – Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

Abidjan Convention

The Abidjan Convention came into force in 1984. Most of the work done under the Abidjan Convention in the 1980s and early 1990s was diagnostic in nature, mostly in the form of background studies, coastal profiles, monitoring programmes and research aimed at defining major issues and problems both at the country and regional level as well as at pilot sites. The projects were slow and took along time to initiate, implement and finalize. However, by 1998 all projects had ended except for the GEF-supported Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem project which is being co-executed by UNDP and UNEP.

The projects implemented between 1984 and 1995, mainly funded by UNEP, resulted in significant capacity-building in the scientific community. However, the projects did not build sufficient momentum and capacity within Government institutions, especially those with the mandate to manage coastal and marine ecosystems; as a result, because of limited activities in the late 1990s, the Convention is less well understood within Governments and consequently the political will to support the Abidjan Convention is poor.

Need to re-tool the Abidjan Convention

There is consensus among all key players that there is a need to strengthen the Abidjan Convention as part of the UNEP revitalization process which began in 1998 as a response to the Maputo Pan-African Conference on Sustainable Integrated Management (PACSIKOM) recommendations and the Cape Town Declaration of 1998. The two processes were merged and aptly referred to as an African Process for the Development and Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in sub-Saharan Africa. The Africa Process culminated in the NEPAD programme of interventions on the marine and coastal environment.

At the Ministerial Conference on Resources Mobilization Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), held in Dakar from 12 to 14 October 2004, the participating countries reaffirmed their commitments towards the Abidjan Convention; the Convention was thus assigned as a regional platform in the area of the integrated management of marine and coastal resources.

The main assumption is that the Abidjan Convention has realistic chances to reinvent itself as a vehicle for sustainable development, in support of NEPAD. The Abidjan Convention is therefore expected to play a coordinating role in the implementation of a series of intervention projects which will support the NEPAD process in the implementation of the NEPAD action strategy on environment.

Work programme 2005-2007 for the Abidjan Convention

The work programme 2005–2007 for the Abidjan Convention takes into consideration the following aspects of the Abidjan Convention:

- The need for a renewed commitment from Governments
- The need for a sustainable financing mechanism
- The need for a strong, effective coordination mechanism

The coastline of the coastal States covered by Abidjan Convention exceeds 14,000 km (Mauritania to South Africa). The Convention area covers 21 countries with three distinct ecosystems, the Benguela, Guinea and the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystems. The countries bordering the Canary in the northern region and the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystems in the southern region of the Abidjan convention countries are dominated by desert conditions. The countries sharing the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem, on the other hand, experience humid tropical conditions.

The coastal ecosystems within the Abidjan Convention area include barriers and lagoons, deltas, wetlands, mangroves, and seagrass meadows. The most important resources from an economic standpoint are fisheries, oil and gas, and minerals including sand, limestone and diamonds. Tourism also makes an important contribution to the economy of the region. Tourism is a growing industry and coastal tourism is an important foreign-exchange earner for such countries as Gambia, Senegal and Namibia. In South Africa, tourism generates over \$1.2 billion annually, with over 20 million international and domestic visitors to coastal areas each year.

As a consequent of intense industrial activities, the coastal areas are the most densely inhabited and industrialized parts of many coastal States within the Convention area, with approximately half the population residing within 100 km of the coastline. The coastal areas are also the location of the main import and export centres and provide food supplies for the landlocked countries of Africa.

The coastal and marine environment is therefore facing a multitude of problems threatening natural resources, most of them stemming from the current unsustainable resource exploitation practices. Poor regulation, use of inappropriate gear and quotas, selective harvesting of preferred species and harvesting of small-size classes and reproductive females result in the overexploitation of fishery stocks. Also, high rates of mineral exploitation in the region are causing widespread destruction of critical habitats in the coastal areas with concomitant effects on living resources.

The challenge in developing a new work programme for the period 2005–2007 is the need to address the problem of inadequate financial resources, the need to strengthen coordination and the need to implement catalytic activities.

The work programme for 2005–2007 will be based on the experience gained from the implementation of the biennial work programme for Nairobi Convention and will include the UNEP Regional Seas Strategic Directions. First, the Programme will address activities which will strengthen the coordination mechanism, within the 2005–2007 period, with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP/GPA). The coordination structure will address the need for establishing task forces and will use the Large Marine Ecosystems as the basis for a nodal framework for addressing the priorities of the participating countries.

Second, the work programme will cover activities which will promote the ratification process and enhance political support and financial sustainability, e.g., through high-level ministerial trips to the countries which have not ratified the Convention, participation of Ministers or senior Government officials in relevant workshops, forums and the meetings of the Contracting Parties.

Third, the work programme will cover activities which will increase the Abidjan Convention's contribution to the sustainable development of the Convention area and enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention by creating a regional network and database for physical alteration and destruction of habitat, waste management, coastal erosion and cross-cutting issues, an inventory and/or database of institutions and experts, and promoting capacity-building in the West Africa region.

Fourth, the work programme will support and host intergovernmental meetings during the period 2005–2007, including meetings of task forces, legal and technical experts, focal point forums and the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties, and also the establishment of focal-point network with real-time connectivity.

Lastly, the work programme will support the establishment of regional centres in certain participating countries within the Convention area so as to facilitate the implementation process of action plans and link up with ongoing activities and programmes of other agencies and organizations, such as the Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa (ODINAFRICA), the Interim Secretariat of the Environmental Component of NEPAD (SINEPAD), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), WWF, and Large Marine Ecosystems projects.

Strategic Direction 1: Increase Regional Seas' contribution to sustainable development

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
Increase Regional Seas' contribution to sustainable development, through the enhancement of local, national, regional and global partnerships with relevant social, economic and environmental stakeholders, building upon the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals within the context of the Regional Seas mandate.	1.1. Review and assess existing national/regional data and information related to physical alteration and destruction of habitats (PADH).	Inventory of habitats Provision of status of data on the marine and coastal environment	Maps of habitats National and regional monographs	Mapping institutions and research centres Centre de Recherches Océanologiques (CRO), Centre universitaire de recherche et d'application en télédétection (CURAT), Centre de cartographie et de télédétection (CCT), Comité National de Télédétection et d'Information Géographique (CNTIG), Centre de Recherches Oceanographiques de Dakar-Thiaroye (CRODT), FAO, Regional Programme for the Conservation of Coastal and Marine Resources in West Africa (PRCM), WWF, Nigerian Institute for Oceanography and Marine Research (NIOMR), Wetlands International, UNDP, GEF, IOC-UNESCO, Environmental and Coastal Integrated Management Research Centre (CGILE), national institutions
	1.2. Create a regional network and database on PADH, waste management, coastal erosion and cross-cutting issues, productivity indicators, etc.	Standardization of methodologies	Databanks	National institutions, CRO, CURAT, CCT, CNTIG, NIOMR, CRODT, IOC-UNESCO (ODINAFRICA) Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) Africa, FAO, UNIDO, etc. CGILE
	1.3. Review existing national/regional policies, institutional arrangements and legislation on marine and coastal ecosystems.	Inventory and evaluation of national and regional policies and legislations	Compendium of legislative texts	Commission sous-régionale des pêches (CSRP), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ministries of Planning, West African organizations, national institutions
	1.4. Assess the effectiveness of existing awareness mechanisms relative to waste minimization, reuse, recycling, and composting.	Assessment of all existing mechanisms Develop lobbying activities with decision-makers and target groups	Assessment documents	National institutions, ENDA Tiers Monde, Ministries of Higher Education, social research institutions

Strategic Direction 2: Enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the Regional Seas

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
Enhance sustainability and effectiveness of Regional Seas Programmes through increasing country ownership, translating Regional Seas conventions and protocols into national legislation, promoting compliance and enforcement mechanisms, involving civil society and the private sector, building capacities, ensuring viable financial arrangements together with developing assessment/evaluation procedures where appropriate.	2.1. Create inventory and database of institutions and experts and their fields of competence, including the ones specialising in physio-chemical, chemical and bacteriologic analyses.	Prepare a compendium	Compendium	CRO, CURAT, CCT, CNTIG focal points, CRODT, Agence nationale de l'environnement (ANDE), Centre béninois de la recherche scientifique et technique (CBRS), NIOMR, Ministries of Higher Education, South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research (SANCOR), national institutions
	2.2. Promote capacity-building and exchange of expertise.	South-South and North-South cooperation Training	Qualified human resources	National institutions, Ministries of Higher Education, CRO, CURAT, CCT, CNTIG, Centre ivoirien anti-pollution (CIAPOL), NIOMR, IOC-UNESCO (ODINAFRICA), ENDA Tiers Monde, GOOS-Africa, FAO, UNIDO, SANCOR, etc.
	2.3. Elaborate and implement action plans for mitigating marine pollution.	Study of land-based and sea-based sources of pollution and their impacts Adopt strategic plans of action against pollution	Prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution	CRO, CURAT, CCT, CNTIG CIAPOL, PRCM, IMO, UNEP, GPA, CSRP, national institutions, South African Maritime Safety Association (SAMSA), etc.

Strategic Direction 3: Enhance Regional Seas' visibility

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
Enhance Regional Seas' visibility and political impact in global and regional policy-setting through the establishment of a strengthened "Regional Seas Alliance" addressing emerging and priority issues, publishing regular statements on them, promoting a joint information centre. Evaluate national strategies for the management of discharges from rivers, estuaries, coastal establishments and outfalls, coastal dumping or any other sources. Promotion of Regional Seas in relevant regional and global forums.	3.1 Develop and implement policies which promote the introduction of measures for waste management, recycling and cleaner technologies.	Establishment of regional centres in both English- and French-speaking countries.	Policies	UNIDO Cleaner Technologies Centre of Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa.
	3.2 Develop and implement pilot recycling projects at the community level.	Each country should develop pilot recycling projects at the community level.	Demonstration projects	National focal points
	3.3 Elaborate and develop a protocol for the management of land-based sources of pollution for consideration by the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention.	Adopt a land-based sources protocol with support of the Global Programme of Action for the Convention area.	Land-based sources Protocol	National focal points
	3.4 Produce maps/atlasses of important and critical fisheries/nursery grounds to include mangroves and associated ecosystems (wetlands, etc.).	Link up with ODINAFRICA III and Large Marine Ecosystems initiatives.	Maps/atlasses of critical habitats	National focal points, IOC-UNESCO ODINAFRICA, Large Marine Ecosystems, Centre de suivi écologique (CSE) (Senegal), Centre national des sciences halieutiques de Boussoura (CNSHB) (Guinea), PRCM, Côte d'Ivoire: CCT/Bureau national d'études techniques et de développement (BNETD), CNTIG, Centre Universitaire de l'Université de Cocody (CURAD); Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographical Information Systems (CERGIS) (Ghana).
	3.5 Update web site with Abidjan Convention projects.	RCU to update and maintain web site. Link up with existing web sites such as the African Ocean Portal of IOC-UNESCO.	Web site updated and maintained	RCU, African Ocean Portal of IOC/UNESCO, National focal points.
	3.6 Revitalize newsletter for the Regional Seas.	RCU and UNEP to reintroduce newsletter and brochures	Newsletters, brochures, pamphlets	National focal points, RCU, UNEP.
	3.7 Co-hosting and co-sponsoring of international and national workshops.	RCU, focal points and UNEP to make presentations on and advertise Convention at such meetings.	Public awareness campaign; information disseminated through scientific publications.	National focal points
	3.8 Enhance the role of focal points	Support for operational cost of focal points.	Budgetary allocation to focal points.	UNEP, NEPAD, WWF, bilateral/multilateral organizations, SIDA, IMO, PRCM.

Strategic Direction 4: Monitoring and assessment

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
Support knowledge-based policy-making, development and implementation of relevant environmental legislation, improve knowledge on the state of the marine environment and enhance public awareness by contributing to the establishment/strengthening of appropriate national and regional monitoring and periodic assessment of the marine and coastal environment.	4.1 Assess the effect of PADH on specially protected areas such as highly sensitive coastal ecosystems and species.	National environmental ministries and sectors.	Publication on PADH.	National focal points, national institutions, UNEP/GPA.
	4.2 Source and review the existing documents, data and activities related to critical fish habitats, mangroves and associated ecosystems.	National initiatives carried out by universities and research institutes. Link up with the ODINAFRICA project.	Compendium of publications.	National focal points, national institutions, IOC-UNESCO ODINAFRICA.
	4.3 Assess impact of fishing operations on endangered species, e.g., turtles, and provide recommendations for their conservation.	Research institutes, fishery departments and international organizations such as IUCN and WWF.	Status report/publications.	National focal points, national institutions, IUCN, WWF.
	4.4 Assess distribution, diversity, uses and threats to mangroves within the region.	National initiatives through existing national and regional programmes.	Status report/publications.	National focal points, national institutions, IUCN, WWF, national Large Marine Ecosystem coordination units.
	4.5 Assess regional networking mechanism for monitoring and management of fisheries, mangroves and associated ecosystems.	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF), FAO in conjunction with national fishery departments. Mangroves and associated ecosystems through Large Marine Ecosystems programmes.	Regional data exchange and information management.	National focal points, national Large Marine Ecosystem coordination units, FAO, CECAF.
	4.6 Assess capacity at national level to develop policies and strategies related to waste management.	Environmental ministries and sectors/local governments.	Policies and strategies.	National focal points, local governments, UNEP-GPA.
	4.7 Assess and develop a regional networking mechanism for monitoring implementation of national policies and strategies.	Strengthen existing regional facilities through RCU. National focal point to submit annual assessment report to RCU.	Regional data exchange and monitoring of national policies.	National focal points.
	4.8 Monitor and survey organic and inorganic pollutants and their effects on fisheries in general.	National research institutes with support from the existing UNEP persistent organic pollutants programmes and UNIDO, Large Marine Ecosystems.	Periodic reports.	National focal points, national institutions, universities, UNEP, UNIDO.

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
	4.9 Inventory mangrove sites to be restored, with particular emphasis on critical areas.	National/regional initiatives through UNIDO-GEF support programmes. National focal points to provide list of relevant non-governmental organizations and research institutions.	Maps/atlas using GIS.	National focal points, national institutions.
	4.10 Monitor and survey shoreline changes to establish management plans in sensitive areas prone to erosion.	GIS mapping/shore profiling to be carried out by various countries with assistance of ODINAFRICA III (Work Package 4) and existing regional initiatives.	Environmental sustainability index (ESI) maps	National focal points, national institutions, IOC-UNESCO ODINAFRICA.
	4.11 Collect up-to-date information on land-based sources and dumping activities in the region and assess land-based sources and pollutants at national and regional levels.	National/regional institutions through Large Marine Ecosystems, GPA and IMO format.	Assessment reports.	National focal points, national institutions, UNEP-GPA.
	4.12 Evaluate sources of pollution and carry out risk assessment.	Carry out service and assessment of sources of pollution, including risk.	Status report	National focal points, national institutions, UNEP-GPA.
	4.13 Develop sensitivity studies, sensitivity mapping and prediction models.	Develop ESI mapping and modelling.	ESI maps and software	National focal points, national institutions, UNEP-GPA.
	4.14 Develop contingency plans and promote elaboration of subregional contingency plans.	Development of national contingency plans and harmonization into regional plan.	National and regional contingency plans.	National focal points, national institutions, IMO.
	4.15 Coordination with partners and discussion on emerging issues, e.g., turtles, manatees; establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) and the role of the convention in those matters.	Development of environmentally and friendly fishing practices/gear (e.g., turtle-excluding devices, etc.) for conservation of threatened/ endangered marine species. Demarcate specific coastal areas as MPAs in line with the decisions of the World Park Congress (2003) and Convention on Biological Diversity guidelines	Sustainable fisheries, conservation of endangered species. Designated MPAs.	FAO, UNEP, national institutions. WWF, IUCN, national institutions.

Strategic Direction 5: Enhance the use of Regional Seas as a platform for the coordinated implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and global initiatives

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners	
Increase the use of Regional Seas as a platform for developing common regional objectives, promoting synergies and coordinated regional implementation of relevant multilateral environmental agreements, global and regional initiatives and responsibilities of United Nations agencies such as IMO, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), IOC-UNESCO and FAO, and also other international actors, as a contribution to the sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment.	Coordination within Abidjan Convention area.	Coordination.	Memorandum of understanding	UNEP, regional partners	
		5.1 Establish memorandum of understanding between UNEP and host country.			
		5.2 Review Host Country Agreement.	Reviewed Host Country Agreement	RCU	
			5.3 Develop a business plan for RCU (including terms of reference, staff requirements and budget).	Business plan, reports	RCU
			RCU through the Forum of Focal Points and other partners to take lead in developing common regional position papers in relation to various global forums.	Technical Expert Group	National institutions
			Sustainable Financing Mechanism The Vice-Chair for Resource Mobilization should facilitate in realizing member States' contributions to the Trust Fund.	Effective financing mechanism.	Member States, regional partners
			RCU through the focal points should inform and urge the member countries to pay their contributions to the Trust Fund.	Sustainable funding through contributions/donations to the Trust Fund.	
			5.7 RCU to follow up on realization of country contributions to the Trust Fund on a regular basis.	Adequate financial resources.	
			5.8 RCU may explore possibilities for generating financial resources from the ongoing and planned regional projects and programmes through developing partnerships and, if applicable, through signing memorandums of understanding.	Memorandums of understanding	
		5.9 RCU to develop a mechanism to collaborate with SINEPAD on resource mobilization.	Adequate financial resources.		

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
	<p>Comprehensive revision and updating of Abidjan Convention and its Protocol.</p> <p>Development of new Protocols on: land-based sources MPAs.</p> <p>Inventory and review existing institutional and legislative framework related to the management of land-based sources of pollution of the coastal and marine environment at the national and regional levels.</p>	<p>Legislative framework/new protocols 5.10 RCU to facilitate review of national legislation and institutional arrangements concerning land-based sources.</p>		
		5.11 Identify resource persons/ institutions to address the identified gaps in legislation/ institutions.	Existing Regional Legal and Technical Task force; Terms of reference	
		5.12 Set up a Legal and Technical Task Force to define terms of reference for the Task Force, to enable it, among other things, to carry out a comprehensive review of the Abidjan Convention and its related Protocol; to suggest necessary revisions and changes; to develop a draft protocol on land-based sources; and to develop a draft protocol on MPAs.	<p>Draft revised Convention and Protocol</p> <p>Draft land-based sources protocol</p> <p>Draft MPA protocol.</p>	<p>IMO</p> <p>GPA-land-based sources</p>
		5.13 RCU to submit the draft instruments (convention and protocols) to the meeting of the Contracting Parties.		WWF, IUCN
		5.14 Produce and disseminate adopted instruments	Instruments distributed	
Accede to global conventions		5.15 Prepare a status report on accession to relevant multilateral environmental agreements and global conventions by the member States.	Status report	

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
		5.16 RCU to develop an advocacy plan for accession and enforcement of national legislation adopted to give effect to the relevant convention by the member States.	Advocacy plan	
	Conduct ministerial-level missions to promote accession and ratification processes.	5.17 Conduct ministerial-level missions to promote accession and ratification. Partnerships.	Missions, full accession and ratification.	
		5.18 RCU should undertake an inventory of relevant projects/programmes at regional and national level.	Compendium/ directory on all regional programmes; member States informed of all Large Marine Ecosystem programmes.	Large Marine Ecosystems, GEF, UNEP
		5.19 RCU should update the inventory on a regular basis and interact with them to develop partnerships and linkages.	Compendium/ directory on all regional programmes. Member States informed of all Large Marine Ecosystem programmes.	Regional Convention Secretariats
		5.20 RCU should facilitate engagement of relevant civil society organizations in implementing various activities at national and regional levels.	National- and regional level multi-stakeholders' forum established	All identified stakeholders
		Information sharing 5.21 RCU to gather and disseminate to member States all relevant information on the priority actions designed and implemented within the three Large Marine Ecosystem programmes of the Convention area.	Compendium/ directory on all regional programmes. Information exchange/ dissemination.	The three Large Marine Ecosystem projects, national Governments

Strategic Direction 6: Promote the ecosystem approach for integrated management

Strategic guidelines for the Regional Seas Programme	Proposed actions by Abidjan Convention	Activities	Expected output	Partners
Promote the development of a common vision and integrated management, based on the ecosystem approach, of priorities and concerns related to the coastal and marine environment in Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, introducing, among other things, proactive, creative and innovative partnerships and networks.	Evaluate national strategies for the management of discharges from rivers, estuaries, coastal establishments and outfalls, coastal dumping or any other sources.	Land-based source management strategies	Status reports	National and regional institutions.
		6.1. RCU to compile status report on management strategies on discharges in the Abidjan Convention area in relation to defined ecosystems such as the three Large Marine Ecosystems.		
	Review status and effectiveness of management structures related to coastal erosion in the region and, based on the results of the review, implement effective management structures where they do not exist.		6.2 Stimulate dialogues at national level to design strategies to reverse the present processes (see Protocol, legislation under Strategic Direction 5)	National-level policy development forums with participation of lawyers, policy advocates, policy analysts, judges.
Coastal erosion management			Status reports	National and regional institutions.
6.3. RCU to compile status report on current management strategies and their effectiveness in mitigating coastal erosion, with particular reference to the three Large Marine Ecosystems.				

Annex VI

Statements made at the heads of delegation meeting

1. UNEP

Opening statement at the heads of delegation meeting by the Coordinator of the Regional Seas Programme of UNEP, Dr. Ellik Adler

- Your Excellency, Vice Prime Minister for Gabon, Mr. Emmanuel Ondo Methogo;
- Your Excellency, Chairlady of the Abidjan Conference of Parties, Ms. Angèle Gnonsoa;
- Honourable Ministers, Heads of delegations;
- Representatives of NGOs and the civil society;
- Representatives of partners, brothers and sisters to the Abidjan Convention;
- Dear friends and colleagues.

On behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Klaus Töpfer, I am honoured to open and welcome you to this very important 7th meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention.

The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans are comprehensive agreements that have been very effective in engaging Governments in protecting the environment. The conventions cover a wide range of issues, ranging from pollution from land-based activities, chemicals and coastal development to the conservation of marine biodiversity and entire ecosystems.

The limited geographic focus of each Regional Seas Convention or Action Plan enables the participating countries to channel the energies of a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups to solving interlinked problems and to address the relationship between the legal and biophysical dimensions of the coastal and marine environment.

The Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention exhibit differing governance structures, and political, social and economic variations between the countries. Consequently, each country responds to coastal and marine issues in a different way. The Abidjan Convention provides a mechanism for regional coordination and a framework for effective regional actions.

With the increasing number of environmentally related, national, regional and international initiatives, programmes and projects on the marine and coastal environment, the need for an effective coordination mechanism in the Convention area cannot be over-emphasized. The challenge is how to re-tool the Abidjan Convention as an effective vehicle for sustainable development, and as a regional umbrella to support the New-Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

One of the leading objectives of the African Process for the Protection and Management of the Marine Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa was to revitalize the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions. The outcome of the African Process was integrated into NEPAD and the network of African experts established during the African Process will work closely to support the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions to implement the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative, particularly with regard to the marine and coastal environment.

The intergovernmental process under the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions remains the best channel for implementing the programme of interventions and projects of the African Process under the direction of the NEPAD interim secretariat.

To address this new focus, the objectives for the Abidjan convention have to be reconfigured, with a view to placing more emphasis on, first, raising awareness of the economic values to coastal and marine resources and the threats to marine living resources; and, second, strengthening regional coordination mechanisms and building effective subregional frameworks for actions designed to reverse the degradation and destruction of critical habitats.

For the further development of an effective coordination mechanism, the regional coordination unit will endeavour to establish national task teams led by a senior government officer – the focal point – from all participating countries, to implement aspects of the work programme of the Abidjan Convention based on the peculiarities of each of the three large marine ecosystems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in May 2002, the Contracting Parties requested the Regional Coordination Unit and the Bureau, in collaboration with UNEP, to take measures to urge countries in the region that were not yet Parties to the Convention to accede to or ratify it. It was decided, among other things, that the Chair of the Bureau of the Convention should undertake a mission to some of the countries in the region to encourage additional ratifications and to mobilize contributions to the Trust Fund.

Accordingly, Ms. Angèle Gnonsoa, Minister for the Environment of Côte d'Ivoire, Chair of the Bureau of the Convention, Ms. Nasseré Kaba, Interim Coordinator, and a consultant, Mr. Kwame Koranteng, undertook missions to Senegal, Mauritania, Gabon, Namibia and Angola between 4 and 22 September 2004.

At these meetings, deliberations focused primarily on the need for the countries to ratify the Abidjan Convention and to contribute to the Trust Fund. The governments were very supportive of the missions and in Mauritania the Minister for Foreign Affairs offered to bring the ratification process to a quick conclusion.

A forum of focal points of the Abidjan Convention was held in November 2004 in Accra, Ghana. The objective of the forum was to prepare a detailed work programme for the period 2005–2007. The forum also discussed and agreed on the formal establishment of the focal points network to support the operation of the Regional Coordinating Unit.

In accordance with the Parties' decision at their sixth meeting, the proposed 2005–2007 work programme for the Abidjan Convention takes into consideration the following needs:

- Need for a renewed commitment from Governments;
- Need for a sustainable financing mechanism; and
- Need for a strong and effective coordination mechanism.

This is an ambitious programme of work. Its implementation depends primarily on the input from the countries.

The primary challenge facing implementation of a new work programme for the period 2005–2007 is the need to overcome the problem of inadequate financial resources, to strengthen coordination and to implement catalytic activities.

Accordingly, the work programme will incorporate activities designed to strengthen the coordination mechanism, with the kind support from SIDA and the Global Programme of Action.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, I would like to thank the secretariat for their work, and the His Excellency, Vice Prime Minister for Gabon, Mr. Emmanuel Ondo Methogo, the government and the people of Gabon for hosting this meeting.

While the process of revitalizing the Abidjan Convention is on track, the rapid development of environment-related programmes in the region has meant that the coordination and sharing of information on activities has become complex and competitive. Consequently, it is essential that the Regional Coordinating Unit be strengthened and an effective sub-regional support structure put in place to facilitate closer coordination. Such a structure will help decentralize implementation by bringing the coordination function closer to the centres of activity of the large marine ecosystem projects.

We at UNEP, are, as always, committed to continue our support to the Abidjan Convention, and to work together with you, the countries of the region, in order to achieve effectiveness, success and viability of the Convention.

Thank you.

2. Côte d'Ivoire

Allocution de la Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de l'Environnement, Hon. Angèle Gnonsoa à la réunion des Chefs de Délégation

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chers Collègues

- Excellence Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, Monsieur le Représentant du Directeur Exécutif du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des Organisations bilatérales et multilatérales;
- Distingués Experts;
- Honorables invites;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

C'est un grand honneur pour mon pays la Côte d'Ivoire de participer en sa qualité de partenaire actif dans le concert des nations engagées pour la sauvegarde de la zone côtière exceptionnelle couverte par la Convention d'Abidjan.

Aussi, permettez-moi, honorables délégués, d'exprimer toute ma satisfaction de compter chacun de vous au nombre des pays venus discuter et prendre des décisions idoines concernant cet espace que nous avons en partage parce que bordant chacun de nos états respectifs.

Je voudrais féliciter le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement, notre indéfectible soutien et dont l'engagement nous rappelle quotidiennement que tel la prunelle de nos yeux, tel devrions nous préserver notre environnement.

Je voudrais également associer à ces félicitations, le Secrétariat technique de ces travaux dont les efforts louables ont abouti à la tenue effective de cette rencontre, la qualité des documents soumis à notre examen témoigne de l'ardeur déployée pour les confectionner.

Je relève que nos points focaux nationaux respectifs ont enrichi les travaux préparatoires de leurs contributions sous la forme de rapports nationaux. Je les félicite et les encourage à appuyer davantage l'Unité de Coordination Régionale (UCR), car sans le soutien des points focaux le mécanisme de coordination mis en place ne sera jamais efficace.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Il me plaît, en cet instant, de saluer le gouvernement et le peuple gabonais qui, sous la conduite éclairée de Son Excellence le Président Omar Bongo Ondimba, nous a réservé un accueil digne des meilleures traditions d'hospitalité.

Je voudrais aussi manifester notre profonde gratitude à l'Agence Suédoise de Coopération Internationale dont l'appui financier inestimable a contribué à la revitalisation de la Convention d'Abidjan.

Le soutien du gouvernement suédois est d'autant appréciable que l'on constate une réduction drastique de l'aide internationale en dépit des engagements exprimés à l'occasion de l'adoption de la déclaration sur les Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement.

Il apparaît, comme les Ministres de l'environnement l'ont récemment indiqué lors du dernier Conseil d'Administration du PNUE, que ces Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement pourraient se muer en chimère si la tendance actuelle à la réduction de l'aide au développement se confirme.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

La zone côtière constitue pour nos états un atout majeur dans la mise en œuvre des politiques de développement. De nombreuses activités y sont déployées, leur pérennité dépend de la qualité environnementale de cette zone. C'est pourquoi, aujourd'hui plus qu'hier, nous sommes tous conscients, des conséquences extrêmement graves de la dégradation de l'espace côtier sur le niveau de vie des populations parmi les plus vulnérables de nos états.

Cette prise de conscience a suscité l'engagement de nos états à œuvrer pour la sauvegarde de la zone côtière. La Convention d'Abidjan est l'instrument de stratégie et d'interventions communautaires que nous avons conçu à cet effet en 1981.

En 1998, après une période de léthargie, un processus de revitalisation a été entamé avec l'engagement des différents présidents et l'appui du PNUE. Les défis à relever alors étaient entre autres:

- Le faible taux de ratification;
- la faiblesse de l'appui financier;
- une coordination insuffisante;
- l'implication insuffisante des organismes sous régionaux de coopération économique pour le développement.

Le bureau que vous avez constitué en mai 2002, et que j'ai l'honneur de conduire, s'est attelé à contribuer à la résolution de ces défis, tout en sachant que c'est une oeuvre de longue haleine.

Aujourd'hui, je peux me réjouir de noter que des pierres ont été apportées à l'édifice commun, permettant à d'autres bureaux de renforcer les acquis.

L'adhésion du Bénin et de l'Afrique du Sud apparaît comme un symbole. Oui, c'est la preuve que la Convention d'Abidjan demeure le creuset de la coopération pour la gestion durable de la zone côtière. Creuset qui rassemble des états dont l'action individuelle demeure peu significative face à l'ampleur des problèmes, mais qui voient décupler les résultats de leurs efforts dès lors qu'ils s'inscrivent dans le cadre de solidarité que constitue la convention d'Abidjan.

La mobilisation des ressources financières est un autre chantier important dont dépend en partie la vitalité de notre institution. Le soutien de l'agence suédoise de coopération internationale, les contributions du Fonds pour l'environnement mondial sont à relever avec satisfaction. Il convient cependant de souligner l'apport peu significatif des parties à la convention et à son protocole. Néanmoins, une motion spéciale doit être adressée à la République d'Afrique du Sud, au Sénégal et à la Gambie qui se sont acquittés de leurs obligations financières. Votre exemple est à suivre pour confirmer notre volonté de consolider les acquis de la Convention d'Abidjan.

Les visites effectuées auprès de certains pays membres ont favorisé la mobilisation de la volonté politique de ces pays autour de la Convention. Ce qui devra se traduire en des ratifications supplémentaires de la Convention et des paiements de contributions au Fonds d'Affectation Spéciale de la Convention.

Le mécanisme de coordination de la convention a été renforcé à travers la désignation par chaque partie contractante d'un point focal national et la tenue à Accra en novembre 2004 du forum des points focaux.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le réseau des points focaux est aujourd'hui établi, mais il reste à équiper et intéresser ces points focaux de moyens nécessaires afin de leur permettre de faciliter la communication entre le PNUE, l'UCR et les administrations et les institutions nationales pour promouvoir les activités de la convention et de son protocole.

C'est pourquoi je demanderais au PNUE de s'activer dans un délai raisonnable pour le renforcement des points focaux et de l'UCR.

L'exigence d'impliquer les organismes sous régionaux de coopération pour le développement et les autres partenaires actifs dans la gestion des ressources biologiques aquatiques, s'est traduite à divers niveaux.

L'implication du NEPAD est l'exemple le plus probant de la participation d'organismes sous régionaux aux activités de la Convention d'Abidjan. Ainsi, l'établissement de nouveaux partenariats avec des organismes et organisations d'envergure internationale tel que l'OMI, l'ONUDI et le WWF préfigure de l'importance à venir de la coopération entre ces entités et la Convention d'Abidjan.

Aussi devons-nous Mesdames et Messieurs adopter des stratégies adéquates pour faire participer nos institutions régionales à nos programmes de gestion durable du milieu marin et des zones côtières. Je veux nommer la CEDEAO et son équivalent pour l'Afrique Centrale sans oublier la Banque Africaine de Développement qui demeure un partenaire important.

Excellences Mesdames Messieurs,

Je reste persuadé que le nouveau bureau qui sera mis en place conduira la Convention d'Abidjan sur la voie de son développement effectif, après la consolidation établie par ses prédécesseurs.

Je tiens enfin à exhorter toutes les Parties Contractantes à assumer avec la plus grande détermination la part de responsabilité qui leur incombe respectivement et promouvoir des axes de coopération et de collaboration dynamiques qui mettent en avant la sauvegarde des intérêts de notre zone côtière.

Je voudrais au nom de ma délégation et au mien propre, terminer mon propos en souhaitant plein succès aux présentes assises et espérer que la mise en oeuvre de la Convention d'Abidjan enregistre rapidement des résultats tangibles.

Je vous remercie.

3. Gabon: Opening statement

Allocution d'ouverture de S.E. Monsieur le Vice-Premier Ministre, Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire, Emmanuel Ondo Methogo

- Excellences, Mesdames et messieurs les Ministres;
- Monsieur le Représentant du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement;
- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs et Représentants du Corps Diplomatique;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des Organisations Internationales et Partenaires au Développement;
- Distingués invités;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Le Gabon et l'Afrique Centrale sont honorés d'abriter, pour la première fois, la Conférence des parties à la Convention d'Abidjan relative à la Coopération en matière de Protection et de Mise en Valeur du Milieu Marin et Côtier de la Région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Au nom de Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat, j'ai, tout d'abord, l'immense privilège de souhaiter à toutes les délégations qui ont fait le déplacement de Libreville, mes vœux les plus chaleureux de bienvenue, ainsi que ceux d'un agréable séjour en terre gabonaise.

Qu'il me soit ensuite permis, au nom du Gouvernement de la République Conduit par S.E. Monsieur Jean-François Ntoutoume-Emane, Premier Ministre, Chef du Gouvernement, que j'ai l'insigne honneur de représenter et au mien propre, de vous exprimer toute notre gratitude pour avoir bien voulu honorer de votre présence les travaux du segment ministériel de la présente Conférence des Parties, la septième du genre, dont j'ai plaisir à présider la cérémonie d'ouverture.

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres,

Comme vous le savez, la Convention d'Abidjan à travers le Plan d'Action de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre appelé WACAF, a été mise en place en 1981. Elle est entrée en vigueur en 1984 pour asseoir une coopération régionale en matière de protection de l'environnement marin et côtier. Elle regroupe 22 Etats africains de la façade atlantique, situés entre la Mauritanie et l'Afrique du Sud, sur plus de 14.000 kms. de côtes.

Si dans les années 80, les objectifs visés par cette Convention n'étaient pas encore bien perçus par les Gouvernements, force est de reconnaître qu'à l'époque, la Communauté Internationale n'avait pas encore placé la préservation de l'environnement au centre de ses préoccupations.

Depuis le Sommet Mondial sur la Terre, tenu à Rio de Janeiro au Brésil en juin 1992, on note avec beaucoup de satisfaction que toutes les politiques de développement ne peuvent plus être mise en oeuvre sans tenir compte de la dimension environnementale.

Concernant l'Afrique, la Conférence Ministérielle sur les Mécanismes de Mobilisation des Ressources pour la mise en oeuvre du Plan d'Action Environnemental du NEPAD, tenue à Dakar au Sénégal en Octobre 2004, a reconnu que la Convention d'Abidjan pourrait être une plate-forme régionale dans le domaine de la gestion intégrée des ressources marines et côtières.

Il s'agit de donner au NEPAD, programme de développement que l'Afrique sa place au centre de ses ambitions, les moyens de son exécution.

C'est la raison pour laquelle cette Convention a besoin d'être revitalisée, pour lui permettre de jouer pleinement son rôle de coordination dans la mise en œuvre des projets de Développement Durable du NEPAD.

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres,

L'environnement côtier et marin fait face à une multitude de menaces dues, pour la plupart, aux mauvaises pratiques de l'homme. En effet, les zones côtières de notre région étant les plus peuplées et les plus industrialisées des pays membres, les différents écosystèmes s'en trouvent par conséquent fortement perturbés, voire détruits et les ressources naturelles menacées d'extinction.

Face à cette situation, il convient de doter notre région de moyens efficaces afin d'assurer un développement durable pour l'ensemble des pays membres de la Convention d'Abidjan et pour le bien-être de leurs populations de la côte.

Les solutions à rechercher consistent en la mise en œuvre d'une politique de coopération régionale dynamique qui concilie les objectifs de développement avec les contraintes de préservation de l'environnement.

Dès lors, la Convention d'Abidjan apparaît comme le véritable outil de développement et de mise en valeur des côtes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre, à condition que les moyens de son action soient opportunément dégagés.

C'est pourquoi, au-delà d'un engagement fort et renouvelé des gouvernements des pays membres que vous représentez, la présente conférence devrait nous permettre d'amener ceux des Etats Signataires, qui ne l'ont pas encore fait, à accélérer le processus de ratification, par leurs Parlements respectifs, de cette convention afin de doter cet instrument d'un mécanisme de financement pérenne et d'un processus de coordination efficace.

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres,

Au regard de la forte mobilisation qui a abouti à la rencontre de ce jour et qui traduit votre souci d'aller de l'avant, je suis persuadé que vous saurez trouver les solutions idoines pour permettre au Secrétariat de la Convention de disposer des outils nécessaires à l'accomplissement de ses missions.

Tout en vous exhortant à faire preuve de rigueur et d'abnégation au cours de vos travaux, je ne puis m'empêcher de reconnaître l'ampleur de la tâche qui vous incombe.

Pour ma part, je voudrais vous assurer que le Gouvernement de la République, sous la Très Haute Direction de Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat, attend beaucoup des résultats de cette conférence afin qu'au sortir des travaux de Libreville, une dynamique nouvelle soit impulsée à la Convention d'Abidjan.

Conforté dans cette conviction et tout en souhaitant pleins succès à vos travaux, je déclare ouverte la septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan relative à la Coopération en matière de Protection et de Mise en Valeur du Milieu Marin et Côtier de la Région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Vive la Coopération Internationale.

Vive la Convention d'Abidjan.

Vive le Gabon.

Je vous remercie.

4. South Africa

Statement by the Deputy Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Hon. Rejoice Mabudafhasi

- Madam Chairperson;
- Honourable Minister for Environment of Côte d'Ivoire;
- Our host the Honourable Minister for Environment of Gabon;
- Your Excellencies;
- Distinguished guests;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed a great pleasure to be here and I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Gabon for their kind hospitality and for hosting this very important meeting. My sincere thanks also goes to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other partners who have pledged their continued support for the Abidjan Convention.

Chairperson, it is now just over two decades ago that the Abidjan Convention entered into force and it seems the opportune time to take stock of the implementation of this convention and address the numerous constraints that influence its effective implementation. As we attempt to address these constraints, we need to re-commit ourselves in support of the objectives of this convention.

Chairperson, since the last meeting of the Contracting Parties, South Africa has ratified both the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions. We view these conventions as important instruments to address the multitude of challenges facing our nations and commit ourselves to the objectives of these conventions. With this said, it would be appropriate to change the name and geographical scope of the Abidjan Convention to reflect South Africa's inclusion.

With its coastline of 3,100 km, South Africa is rich in marine and coastal resources. Over the years we have developed the necessary policies and legislation to protect our marine and coastal resources, but moreover to ensure its sustainability. We have implemented many programmes and projects at the national and regional level, which falls squarely within the ambit of the Abidjan Convention. Some of these include the following: establishment of Marine Protected Areas and Transfrontier Conservation Areas; oil spill contingency plans and sensitivity mapping; strategic management measures and plans for sustainable fisheries; national action plans and integrated pollution and waste management strategies; programme to address the invasive alien species – incidentally, South Africa was the only pilot country in the region in respect of the global ballast water programme. At the regional level within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), South Africa actively participates in the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) and Benguela Fisheries Interaction and Training (BENEFIT) Programme with Angola and Namibia. A similar arrangement is currently under way with the establishment of the Agulhas Current Large Marine Ecosystem (ACLME) on the east coast with Mozambique and other countries. South Africa is also involved in a programme within SADC to ensure monitoring and surveillance of our waters and to build capacity at the regional level. South Africa recently put to sea environmental protection vessels named after prominent women in the struggle for freedom in our country.

It is gratifying to note that concrete actions are proposed as strategic interventions to address identified issues. However, we must be realistic in our approach, taking into consideration the financial and human resources at our disposal. Whilst the work programme for 2005–2007 makes provision for activities that are relevant, we need to carefully prioritise these activities, bearing in mind what can be achieved within the specified timeframe. We need to engage our partners, both internationally and nationally in the implementation of these activities. Of course, we must not lose sight of an overall objective and that is to eradicate poverty within the context of environmental degradation.

Today, as we prepare to adopt these decisions on certain actions to be embarked upon, we have to reflect on those decisions that were not implemented since the last Contracting Parties Meeting, in particular the decision around finances.

Chairperson, this is an issue that needs serious attention – the financial contribution of Contracting Parties to the Trust Fund. This is our convention – we determine its course. If we want to implement the ambitious work programme and prolong the life span of the Abidjan Convention, we need serious commitments from Contracting Parties to pay their contributions as per the assessed contributions to the Trust Fund.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, perhaps now is an opportune time to explore a joint meeting of both the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions in 2007 as part of an ongoing strategy to facilitate a joint implementing mechanism for these conventions. South Africa would support such a proposal and would favourably consider hosting such an important event.

I thank you.

5. Senegal

Discours du Ministre de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature, Hon. Modou Diagne Fada

- Madame le Ministre d'Etat, Ministre chargé de l'Environnement de la Côte d'Ivoire, Coordonnateur de la Convention d'Abidjan;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres de l'Environnement des pays partis à la Convention d'Abidjan;
- Monsieur le Représentant du Directeur Exécutif du PNUE;
- Messieurs les Représentants des Institutions internationales;
- Mesdames, Messieurs.

Je me réjouis de la tenue de cette présente session qui revêt une importance particulière pour notre écorégion. Cette rencontre qui se tient juste après la deuxième conférence de partenariat sur la mise en œuvre du plan d'action de l'Initiative Environnementale du NEPAD augure de belles perspectives. En effet, le plan d'action de la Convention d'Abidjan doit désormais s'appuyer, non seulement sur la plateforme institutionnelle adoptée, mais aussi sur le fonds de soutien à l'environnement logé à la BAD en tant que partie intégrante des domaines prioritaires de l'environnement africain.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Dans le cadre de la gestion du milieu marin, mon pays, le Sénégal a entrepris les actions ci-après:

- Des travaux de protection contre l'érosion côtière à Popenguine pour un coût d'environ un milliard de francs CFA;
- Présentement, un appel d'offres a été lancé pour les études et la réalisation des travaux de protection côtière des zones de Mbao, Rufisque et la Porte du Millénaire pour un coût estimatif de deux milliards de francs CFA;
- Le projet de gestion de la pollution industrielle dans la Baie de Hann est en cours de finalisation dans le cadre du programme Eau à long terme, volet assainissement;
- Les travaux de nettoyage et de dragage de la Baie de Hann, site pollué de la zone marine et côtière de Dakar sont en cours;
- Le Sénégal et la Mauritanie ont défini avec différents acteurs et l'OMI un partenariat relatif à l'opérationnalisation de leurs plans d'intervention d'urgence en cas de déversement massif d'hydrocarbures;
- Enfin mon pays vient de déposer auprès de l'OMI les éléments de ratification des Conventions MARPOL et CLC 92.

Toutes ces actions sont également complétées par la mise en œuvre de trois programmes structurants:

- PANA (NAPA en anglais): le PANA (Plan d'Actions National d'Adaptation) est un programme financé par le FEM pour les pays les moins avancés et qui a pour objectif la formulation de projets prioritaires urgents relatifs à l'adaptation des secteurs considérés comme les plus vulnérables actuellement aux changements climatiques des zones côtières pour concerne cette convention;
- Le Programme de gestion intégrée des écosystèmes dans quatre paysages représentatifs du Sénégal (PGLES): Ce programme vise à promouvoir la gestion intégrée des écosystèmes et de la biodiversité d'importance mondiale au plan communautaire. Il touche les zones marines et côtières de la mangrove;
- Le Programme GIRMaC (Gestion Intégrée des Ressources Marines et Côtières) vise à asseoir les bases d'une gestion durable des ressources marines côtières. Le programme Mondial et le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (FEM). Les trois composantes du programme sont:
 - le développement de pêcheries durables,
 - la conservation des habitats critiques et des espèces,
 - et la gestion optimale du programme (suivi évaluation, communication, etc.)

Le projet intéresse toute la zone marine et côtière de l'ensemble du littoral sénégalais.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

Aujourd'hui, au plan sous régional, beaucoup de cadres de planification commencent à émerger. J'en citerai les plus fondamentaux:

- Le Programme COI/UNESCO, impliquant cinq pays (Mauritanie, Gambie, Guinée-Bissau, Cap-Vert, Sénégal) a été approuvé par le Conseil d'Administration du FEM et sera bientôt mis en œuvre;
- Le Projet Tourisme durable: ce projet vise l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre d'un PDF-B sur « Réduction des impacts environnementaux du tourisme côtier par l'introduction d'une politique d'échanges et de renforcement du partenariat Public-Privé ». Il concerne des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Sénégal, Gambie, Nigeria, Ghana) et de l'Est (Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles et Tanzanie);
- Le Plan d'action stratégique de La Commission Sous-Régionale des Pêches (CSRP): Il a été préparé par le Secrétariat Permanent de la CSRP, afin de lui permettre de disposer d'un outil d'orientation et de planification propre à renforcer et faciliter la mise en œuvre de ses activités à long terme (2002-2010). La CSRP a été créée le 29 mars 1985 à Dakar, elle regroupe les pays Cap-Vert, Gambie, Guinée, Guinée-Bissau, Mauritanie, Sénégal;
- Le Programme Régional de Conservation de la zone côtière et Marine en Afrique de l'Ouest (PRCM): Créé en 2001, il regroupe les six pays Mauritanie, Sénégal, Gambie, Guinée-Bissau, Guinée, Cap-Vert. Ce programme considère les Aires Marine Protégées (AMP) comme un objectif d'intervention prioritaire;
- Le Plan d'investissement de la Pêche durable, coordonné par la Banque Mondiale, la FAO et le WWF. Ce plan vise à asseoir une stratégie d'exploitation des ressources halieutiques sur une base durable, qui tient compte de la dimension environnement.

Par conséquent, je demeure convaincu, plus que jamais, que la Convention d'Abidjan devrait aider à la cohérence de leur mise en œuvre.

Je ne saurais terminer mon propos sans remercier les autorités gabonaises de la parfaite tenue de cette septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan et de l'accueil chaleureux dont elles nous ont gratifié.

Je remercie également le PNUE et l'ensemble des institutions qui ont soutenu financièrement l'organisation de cette rencontre.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

6. Democratic Republic of the Congo

Communication du Ministre de l'Environnement, Conservation de la Nature, Eaux et Forêts, Hon. Anselme Enerunga

- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chers Collègues;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants des Organisations Internationales et des Agences du système des nations Unies;
- Monsieur le Président;
- Distingués Invités;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts.

C'est pour moi un grand plaisir d'être parmi vous à l'occasion de la 7^{ème} conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan. Mais avant tout, nous voudrions ; au nom de Son Excellence Monsieur le Générale Major Joseph Kabila, Président de la République Démocratique du Congo, du gouvernement congolais, de ma délégation et au mien propre, remercier d'abord le gouvernement gabonais pour son accueil chaleureux et fraternel ainsi que pour l'organisation de cette conférence.

Nous remercions aussi, le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) et autres contribuables, et partenaires qui, par le biais du secrétariat de la convention, ont rendu possible la tenue des présentes assises.

Enfin, nous tenons également à féliciter la Président de la COP7 pour sa nomination.

- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chers Collègues;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants des Organisations Internationales et des Agences du système des nations Unies;
- Monsieur le Président;
- Distingués Invités;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts.

La République Démocratique du Congo dispose de 40 km de littoral sur l'Océan Atlantique. Cette zone, bien que petite en dimension, soit cependant caractérisée par une multiplicité d'intérêts concurrents, manifestes par divers secteurs socio-économiques. En effet, dans cette zone, s'exerce une forte activité pétrolière, se pratique la pêche artisanale et sportive, et ou les activités touristiques y occupent aussi une place prépondérante du fait que les plages et les réserves de mangroves constituent des véritables lieux d'attraction.

La zone côtière de la R.D.C. constitue, à l'instar des autres espaces littoraux mondiaux, une mosaïque de ressources et d'écosystèmes riches et variés (parc Marin des mangroves...) qui ont une importance stratégique pour le bien être et le développement économique et social de la nation. Elle est aussi l'unique porte d'entrée et voie de sortie de notre pays sur la mer pour des échanges commerciaux.

Par ailleurs, deux importantes villes, Boma et Matadi ainsi que la grande cite de Mouanda abritent une population riveraine rurale relativement importante.

C'est toutes ces raisons qui ont milité en faveur du choix de la zone côtier comme l'un des domaines prioritaires dans le cadre des Etudes de vulnérabilité / Adaptation aux changements climatiques en R.D.C.

Ces études viennent de révéler qu'à l'heure actuelle l'espace côtier de la R.D.C. fait face aux problèmes environnementaux de grande ampleur occasionne par les phénomènes d'érosion côtière, d'inondation, de destruction des mangroves, d'ensablement dans le bief maritime et de pollutions dues aux déversements des hydrocarbures par les navires pétroliers et aux déchets toxiques produits par les sociétés d'exploitations et de raffinage du pétrole. Et d'autre part, avec les changements climatiques, les paramètres contrôlant lesdits phénomènes vont contribuer à les accentuer, au point que, à l'horizon 2050 à 2100, certaines agglomérations et infrastructures socio-économiques seront tout simplement rayées de la carte. Cette situation préoccupe au plus haut point les autorités du pays au vu des conséquences déjà visibles. Tant au niveau de notre environnement physique qu'à celui de notre biodiversité.

Elles se sont posées deux questions majeures:

1. La première : Quel sera l'avenir de cette zone côtière face aux enjeux, des changements globaux qui menacent le monde aujourd'hui?
2. La deuxième : Que peuvent être les stratégies d'adaptation conséquentes pour la sauvegarde de cette zone?
 - Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chers Collègues;
 - Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants des Organisations Internationales et des Agences du système des Nations Unies;
 - Monsieur le Président;
 - Distingués Invités;
 - Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts.

La réponse à ces deux questions réside dans l'existence de la Convention d'Abidjan, instrument juridique très important pour la protection et la mise en valeur du milieu marin et des zones côtières africains connaît de sérieux problèmes environnementaux qui constituent actuellement de graves menaces pour des voies et moyens visant des actions urgentes de la protection de nos espaces côtiers.

- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres et Chers Collègues;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants des Organisations Internationales et des Agences du système des Nations Unies;
- Monsieur le Président;
- Distingués Invités;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Experts.

Le forum de ce genre offre une opportunité de jeter les bases d'une gestion durable de notre cote commune.

C'est pour cela que la République Démocratique du Congo réitère son soutien total à la convention d'Abidjan dont le processus de ratification est en cours et très avancé auprès de mon collègue des Affaires Etrangères.

C'est pour cela aussi que la R.D.C. souscrit à l'idée de doter la cote commune africaine d'une structure de coordination et de gestion ainsi que d'un mécanisme de financement qui permettront à la Convention d'Abidjan de jouer valablement et pleinement son rôle comme moyen efficace pour soutenir le développement durable.

Que vive la Convention d'Abidjan.

Merci pour votre aimable attention.

7. Gabon

Déclaration par le Ministre Délégué Alexandre Barro Chambrier, Chef de délégation en lieu et place du Ministre Emile Doumba, Ministre de Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche, de l'Environnement chargé de la Protection de la Nature

Je voudrais tout d'abord, au nom de Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Président de la République gabonaise, Chef de l'Etat, du Gouvernement et du Peuple gabonais exprimer notre satisfaction pour la tenue à Libreville, de la Septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan.

Cet honneur qui nous échoit, traduit également la lourde responsabilité que le Gabon va avoir au cours des deux années à venir, en assurant la présidence de la Convention d'Abidjan, sous l'égide du Secrétariat de la Convention et avec l'assistance du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE).

C'est le lieu pour moi, de vous féliciter pour votre brillante élection au poste de Président de cette Conférence et de vous souhaiter, à vous-même et aux membres de votre bureau, pleins succès dans l'accomplissement de vos lourdes charges durant ces assises et pendant votre mandat.

Il me plait, enfin, de rendre un hommage mérité à Madame Angèle Gnonsoa, Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de l'Environnement de Côte d'Ivoire, qui, en tant que Présidente sortante de la Convention, n'a ménagé aucun effort durant ces deux dernières années, réussissant même à faire ratifier à deux Etats membres (le Bénin et l'Afrique du Sud) la Convention et son Protocole. Qu'elle veuille bien trouver ici, l'expression de notre profonde gratitude.

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Chefs de délégation,

Le récent tsunami qui a causé tant de pertes humaines et matérielles dans plusieurs pays d'Asie du Sud-Est, a montré non seulement que les catastrophes naturelles n'ont pas de frontières; mais aussi que la communauté internationale ne s'est pas encore suffisamment penchée sur les moyens humains, techniques et financiers de les prévenir tant les défaillances, voire les lacunes notoires subsistent encore dans ce domaine à travers le monde, et singulièrement dans les pays en développement.

La présente Conférence nous donne donc l'opportunité d'examiner ensemble de nouvelles stratégies, plus efficaces, de prévention des catastrophes et de gestion durables de nos écosystèmes côtiers et marins que des infrastructures.

En effet, l'un des enjeux majeurs de cette conférence est de voir figurer ces nouvelles stratégies dans la Déclaration que nous allons adopter ce jour, afin de susciter l'adhésion de la communauté internationale, dans un contexte de solidarité agissante et partagée.

Il s'agit concrètement de mettre en place un Plan de gestion intégrée de la zone côtière et marine de notre région, en tenant compte de tous les phénomènes écologiquement et économiquement dévastateurs; car d'autres formes de tsunamis tels que le relèvement du niveau de la mer, l'érosion côtière, les pollutions marines, les déchets et dégazages en haute mer se manifestent aussi intensément à travers notre continent.

C'est dans cet esprit que le Gabon soutient toutes les propositions constructives émises ou qui le seront, dans le cadre du renforcement de la gestion intégrée de la zone côtière et des échanges d'expérience entre nos pays.

Permettez-moi de rappeler ici l'importante Déclaration faite à Brazzaville, en février dernier, par Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Président de la République gabonaise, Chef de l'Etat, lors du Sommet des Chefs d'Etat de la Commission des Forêts d'Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC), dont mon pays assure la Présidence en exercice ; déclaration dans laquelle, il demandait à la Communauté Internationale de mettre « des moyens financiers conséquents dans la protection des écosystèmes marin et côtier ».

A cet effet, le Gabon se félicite de la réalisation de quelques projets porteurs dans le domaine de la protection et l'amélioration de l'environnement marin et côtier, tels que le Projet Grand Ecosystème Mann du Courant de Guinée (GEM CG), auquel il a adhéré depuis 2003, et qui nous augure des lendemains meilleurs dans le suivi écologique de ce milieu fragile.

- Monsieur le Président;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Chefs de délégation.

Pour avoir pris part à la Conférence sur le Partenariat pour le Financement de l'Initiative Environnementale du NEPAD qui a eu lieu à Dakar (Sénégal), du 15 au 16 mars dernier, le Gabon se félicite du fait que la problématique de gestion et de valorisation de l'environnement marin et côtier, ait été au centre des débats dont les conclusions et les recommandations témoignent de l'importance capitale que nous devons accorder désormais à cette question.

Aussi, la Déclaration de Dakar qui consacre la nécessité de procéder au renforcement des capacités des Etats pour la finalisation des projets nationaux et de créer un Fonds africain pour l'environnement, représente-t-elle une avancée significative.

De même, nous marquons notre adhésion aux conclusions et recommandations issues de l'Atelier Régional sur les dynamiques sédimentaires et l'érosion côtière, initié par l'Union Africaine, qui s'est tenu à Accra (Ghana) du 14-18 mars dernier, qui mettent un accent particulier sur la nécessité pour nos Etats de mieux protéger la zone côtière de l'érosion marine, entre autres, et de procéder à un suivi environnemental de ces écosystèmes fragiles afin de déboucher, à terme, sur la mise en œuvre d'un système d'alerte rapide contre les catastrophes.

- Monsieur le Président;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Chefs de délégation.

Au regard du fonctionnement de la Convention d'Abidjan et de son Protocole, notamment de sa mise en œuvre par les Etats parties, le Gabon souligne l'importance d'une adhésion massive et réelle par la ratification de ces instruments de même que l'acquittement des arriérés de contribution imputables à nos Etats.

Cet acquittement devrait participer d'une prise de conscience à un haut niveau de la problématique de la préservation des écosystèmes côtiers et marins, compte tenu de l'importance qu'ils revêtent pour notre région, dont la frange côtière s'étend sur plus de 14.000 km.

Conscient des difficultés économiques auxquelles sont confrontés nos pays, nous les exhortons néanmoins à solder, bon an, mal an, le passif de leurs contributions, afin de permettre une meilleure mise en œuvre de la Convention d'Abidjan.

C'est au regard de cette prise de conscience que la communauté internationale continuera d'apporter un appui encore plus déterminant à cette initiative conjointe aux pays côtiers de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Vive la Convention d'Abidjan.

Vive la Coopération Régionale.

Vive la Coopération Internationale.

Je vous remercie.

8. **Cameroon**

Allocution du Ministre de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature, Hon. Pierre Hele

- Excellences;
- Distingués Délégués;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Permettez-moi avant tout, de dire mes remerciements au Gouvernement et au peuple gabonais pour sa chaleureuse hospitalité manifestée à notre égard à tous ainsi qu'au Secrétariat de la Convention d'Abidjan pour l'organisation de la présente conférence et la qualité des documents de travail.

Long de près de 407 km, la zone côtière de Cameroun regorge de sols fertiles, de minerais et bien d'autres ressources naturelles à l'instar des hydrocarbures, du poisson et des forêts riches en espèces ligneuses et fauniques, ce qui a favorisé un afflux effréné de populations dans la région avec pour corollaire d'intenses activités socio-économiques aux conséquences néfastes sur l'environnement, notamment:

- L'exploitation en off-shore des produits pétroliers participe de la pollution tant de l'atmosphère que des plages et des eaux côtières;
- L'utilisation abusive des engrais et des pesticides chimiques par les grandes sociétés agro-industrielles dans les exploitations agricoles favorise la pollution des sols et des eaux souterraines;
- Les activités excessives de pêche menées en particulier avec des matériels et des méthodes non appropriés mettent en péril les alevins et constituent de ce fait une menace pour les approvisionnements futurs en poissons;
- L'utilisation du bois de chauffe prélevé dans les mangroves aux fins de fumage du poisson constitue la plus grande menace pour l'écosystème de mangroves.

Le milieu côtier de Cameroun est également unique dans la mesure où il s'étend de la laisse de haute mer jusqu'à près de 60 km dans l'arrière-pays à une altitude de 4000 m, comprenant ainsi divers écosystèmes tels les mangroves, les forêts côtières et de montagne, les savanes de montagne, jusqu'au pic du Mont Cameroun, volcan encore en activité, dont le sommet est le plus élevé en Afrique de l'ouest et centrale. Les éruptions volcaniques du Mont Cameroun (dont la plus récente est survenue en 1999) représentent la plus importante menace pour le milieu côtier.

Les éruptions volcaniques s'accompagnent généralement de cendres qui polluent l'atmosphère et de coulées de laves de long des pentes de la montagne, qui détruisent beaucoup de biodiversité et menacent la vie humaine. Un réel danger subsiste par ailleurs, qui se traduit par le fait que ces activités volcaniques sont à même de provoquer des mouvements au fond de l'océan dont la conséquence serait le phénomène Tsunami vécu en décembre 2004 dans l'océan indien.

- Excellences;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Face à toutes ces menaces qui pèsent sur le milieu côtier, le Gouvernement de la République du Cameroun ne ménage aucun effort pour adopter des politiques et autres stratégies fiables de gestion durable des ressources dont regorge l'écosystème, afin de s'assurer que ce dernier continue de rapporter des avantages socio-économiques aux générations actuelles et futures. Ces mesures comprennent:

- L'élaboration d'instruments juridiques et réglementaires. Les lois et réglementations en effet des outils importants permettant au Gouvernement de veiller à l'utilisation rationnelle et la gestion durable des ressources de la région. Le Cameroun jouit d'une expertise nationale suffisante dans ce domaine. Toutefois, il se pose un besoin réel d'assistance technique et logistique;
- Le renforcement des capacités. Un renforcement des capacités de l'administration et des populations locales en matière de gestion des ressources dans la région permettrait de veiller à leur préservation pour le bien et la jouissance des générations actuelles et futures. Au Cameroun, comme dans la plupart des autres pays de notre sous-région, le besoin d'une assistance technique dans ce domaine est réel;
- Les projets en cours d'exécution: L'engagement du Gouvernement de mon pays à assurer la protection, la gestion et le développement du milieu marin et côtier se traduit par l'exécution en cours sur le terrain, d'un certain nombre de projets. C'est le cas, par exemple, du Projet de gestion et de conservation de la biodiversité des mangroves au Cameroun, mis en œuvre avec le concours de la FAO (Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture) ; le Projet de Gestion Intégrée de la Zone Côtière de Kribi-Limbe, mis en œuvre avec la collaboration de l'actuel Projet sur les Grands Ecosystèmes Marins du Golfe de Guinée ; le Projet de Conservation et de Gestion de la Biodiversité mis en œuvre avec le concours de la Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS). Ces projets, faut-il le relever, restent disposés à entretenir une collaboration avec tout nouveau partenaire impliqué dans ce domaine;
- La ratification des conventions et autres accords internationaux relatifs à la gestion intégrée des zones côtières. Le Cameroun a en effet pris conscience de la nécessité d'une coopération régionale et internationale visant à assurer un développement écologiquement sain et durable grâce à une approche globale et coordonnée;
- Excellences;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Il ressort de ce qui précède, que le Gouvernement du Cameroun s'est résolument engagé à la protection, la gestion et au développement de son environnement marin et côtier. Aussi, reste-il, dans l'optique de la réalisation de cet objectif, disposé à collaborer avec tous les partenaires bilatéraux et multilatéraux, surtout dans le domaine de l'évaluation scientifique, eu égard à la rareté de l'information scientifique relative à la pollution marine et à l'absence dans les régions d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre d'un système d'alerte rapide de la pollution.

C'est fort de tout ceci que j'ai la conviction que la renaissance de la Convention d'Abidjan, pour l'appeler ainsi, est la bienvenue.

Merci pour votre aimable attention.

9. Ghana

Speech by the Minister for Environment, Science and Technology of Ghana, Hon. Christine Churcher:

Chair, my colleagues, permit me to express my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Gabon for hosting this important meeting and also render appreciation to all who relentlessly worked behind the scenes to make this meeting possible.

Recent national and global events point to the fact that the objectives of the initiators of the Abidjan Convention are as potent today as they were two decades ago cannot take over.

Problems associated with over-exploitation of living resources, increasing populations, accelerated urbanisation of the coastal area, threat to the oceans due to transportation and exploitation of petroleum resources and biodiversity in the region, pollution from land-based sources due to industrialization and municipal wastes are on the increase leading to loss of biodiversity.

Since impacts of pollution know no boundaries and living resources of the oceans transverse national and international boundaries, it is paramount that we cooperate with one another to solve these problems.

Seeking solutions to these problems require that we pool human, institutional and financial resources to the benefit of our people. We should learn from the experiences of other conventions and as much as possible collaborate with them to protect our environment.

There is no gain in signing conventions when we cannot implement the provisions we have all agreed to abide by for instance, final resource. May I use this opportunity to plead with all parties present to consider this new dispensation as a time for action to move the Abidjan Convention forward.

The Government of Ghana calls for accountability and good governance in the spirit of NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism since this is one of the areas that we shall be judged by the world.

As the chair of work programme, I am happy to note that with the active support of the Regional Seas Secretariat and the Regional Coordinating Unit, a meeting was held in Accra to discuss a work programme for the Convention

This meeting of focal points, the Secretariat, the RCU, experts from the region and partners considered the work programme and agreed on, a number of objectives and strategies to move the Abidjan Convention forward. This work programme is one of the items for our consideration at this conference.

I am happy to note that a number of the programmes are currently on going and being supported by UNEP, UNDP, IMO, FAO, GEF, ACOPS, IOC of UNESCO, member countries and other partners.

Chair, what we need at COP 7 is total commitment from all governments and partners to implement the programmes to achieve the desired results within the targets set.

I wish you all successful deliberations.

10. Benin

Allocution du Secrétaire Générale de la Ministère de l'Environnement, de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme, M. Pascal Yaha, à la réunion des Chefs de Délégation

- Excellence, Monsieur le Président de la 7ème Conférence des Parties de la Convention d'Abidjan;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres;
- Excellence, Monsieur le Directeur exécutif du PNUE;
- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants des Organisations bilatérales et multilatérales;
- Honorables Invités;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

C'est pour moi un grand honneur et un réel plaisir de prendre la parole devant cette Auguste assemblée en ce jour mémorable, à l'occasion de la 7ème Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan au nom du Ministre de l'Environnement, de l'Habitat et de l'Urbanisme du Bénin.

Permettez-moi d'abord, Monsieur le Président, de me joindre aux honorables délégués qui viennent de me précéder pour remercier le Gouvernement gabonais pour sa contribution à l'organisation des présentes assises. Je voudrais saisir l'opportunité qui m'est offerte pour lui transmettre ainsi qu'à tout le Peuple gabonais, les salutations du Peuple béninois, de son gouvernement.

Monsieur le Président

Il ne fait aujourd'hui de doute pour personne que l'environnement côtier et marin est source de santé et de rentabilité économique. Nous en dépendons pour notre alimentation et notre bien-être. Cependant malgré tous les avantages qu'il procure, cette zone très sensible est menacée. Il importe donc de le protéger de toutes sortes de pollution et de dégradation et de lui accorder une attention particulière. C'est d'ailleurs le but fondamental de la présente rencontre.

Au Bénin, la zone côtière s'étend sur 125 kilomètres d'Est en Ouest entre le Togo et le Nigeria et sur environ 60 km de l'Océan Atlantique à l'intérieur du pays. D'une superficie de 8 700 km² (7,7% du territoire national) avec près de 50% de la population et génère une grande partie des besoins de développement.

Dans le souci de protéger cet important patrimoine, le gouvernement béninois a signé et ratifié toutes les conventions pertinentes liées à la protection de l'environnement marin et côtier et a mis en place un cadre, institutionnel, réglementaire, législatif approprié.

Cependant, malgré tous les efforts consentis par l'Etat béninois, force est de constater que la zone côtière est toujours confrontée à de sérieux problèmes de pollutions qui proviennent de sources diverses.

Parmi celles-ci, la pollution tellurique occupe une place importante dans la dégradation de l'environnement côtier et marin. La zone côtière béninoise abrite plus des 80% des unités industrielles du pays. Les effluents industriels sont déversés pour la plupart sans traitement dans les eaux lagunaires et /ou en mer ou infiltrent la nappe phréatique. La mer est ainsi devenue la destination finale des eaux usées, des déchets solides, de différents types de polluants, d'hydrocarbures etc. Tous ces polluants ont un impact cumulé susceptible d'affecter la santé du milieu côtier et marin dont nous dépendons.

Monsieur le Président,

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la convention qui nous réunit ce jour, en vue de préservation de ce milieu sensible dans un esprit de développement durable et afin d'éradiquer la pauvreté, les activités suivantes ont été menées. Il s'agit de:

- Des activités relatives à la lutte contre l'érosion côtière, pour protéger de nombreuses installations économiques et sécuriser les témoins urbains qui accueillent des projets de développement en cours d'exécution et ou d'instruction;

- De la prise de plusieurs textes législatifs et réglementaires dont la loi cadre sur l'environnement et ses textes d'application tels que les décrets sur les Etudes d'Impact Environnemental et sur l'Audit Environnemental. Pour minimiser la pollution due aux activités terrestres, tout industriel voulant s'installer dans cette zone est tenu de réaliser l'Etude d'Impact sur l'Environnement. Depuis 2001, les industries installées dans la zone avant la promulgation de la loi-cadre sont soumises à l'audit environnemental dûment réalisé et suivi par l'Agence Béninoise pour l'Environnement;
- De la protection des Ressources Naturelles pour laquelle nous pouvons citer le Programme d'appui à la gestion durable des zones humides du Bénin. Il s'agit d'un projet de gestion participatif et concerté des lagunes côtières exécuté dans une approche d'intercommunalité dans le contexte de la décentralisation;
- Au projet de gestion Communautaire de la biodiversité des écosystèmes marins et côtiers du Bénin en cours de mise en œuvre avec l'appui du FEM;
- Au projet de création d'une zone d'aménagement touristique sur la route des pêches;
- De plus mesurant à sa juste valeur l'importance de la zone côtière et du milieu marin, le Bénin a validé le Plan National d'Intervention d'Urgence en cas de pollution marine accidentelle.

Ces quelques projets de grande envergure, loin d'être exhaustifs, traduisent bien la volonté du Gouvernement Béninois à mettre en place au Bénin, les conditions optimales pour une gestion durable de la zone côtière. Ils traduisent également la conviction selon laquelle le Bénin à l'instar des autres pays de la sous région, reconnaît l'importance de cette zone et tient à assumer ses responsabilités à assumer pour une meilleure protection de l'environnement côtier et marin.

Monsieur le Président,

Le Bénin dans sa recherche de solutions durables à la menace qui pèse sur sa zone côtière a mis également en application plusieurs recommandations issues d'importantes conférences en vue de lutter contre la dégradation du milieu. Cependant la situation reste loin d'être inversée. C'est d'ailleurs pour s'enrichir des expériences des autres pays africains et pour trouver une solution concertée à ce phénomène que le Bénin a tenu de participer à cette importante assise.

Monsieur le Président,

Les raisons de la tenue de la septième Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan sont bien connues. Il s'agit de discuter et d'approuver le programme de travail pour la période 2005-2007 et trouver un mécanisme de financement de la mise en œuvre de la convention et du renforcement de sa coordination. Ce sont des objectifs honorables qui pourraient assurer le décollage effectif de la convention d'Abidjan.

Monsieur le Président,

L'application de la Convention d'Abidjan ne peut aboutir aux résultats escomptés que si les parties se sentent solidaires les uns des autres. C'est d'ailleurs pour cette raison que je voudrais nous inviter à prendre conscience de nos responsabilités nationales et internationales afin d'agir en conséquence pour assurer dans une parfaite synergie la mise en œuvre des différents programmes liés à cette convention. Il serait par ailleurs souhaitable que dans notre plan d'action un accent soit mis sur:

- la cohérence avec les autres conventions en vue d'éviter les double emploi et le gaspillage de ressources limitées;
- l'encouragement et la promotion des bonnes pratiques en matière de protection et de mise en valeur du milieu marin et côtier de notre région au titre des mesures incitatives.

Pour terminer, je voudrais, une fois de plus, au nom du Gouvernement béninois, rendre hommage au Secrétariat de la Convention et à la Coordination Régionale d'Abidjan qui ont, de part leurs efforts inlassables, contribué à la tenue de cette conférence.

Mon souhait le plus ardent est que les présentes assises ne soient pas une rencontre de plus, mais assises qui apportent une réelle valeur ajoutée pour nos économies respectives

Je vous remercie.

11. Togo

Déclaration de la Chargée d'Etudes du Ministère de l'Environnement et des Ressources Forestières de Togo, Mme Mary Yaou:

- Monsieur le Vice-Premier Ministre, Représentant du Président de la République, son excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba;
- Mesdames et messieurs les Ministres;
- Monsieur le Directeur Exécutif du programme des nations Unis pour l'Environnement;
- Monsieur le directeur du Bureau Régional pour l'Afrique du PNUE;
- Monsieur le Président de la Convention d'Abidjan;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des organisations bilatérales et multilatérales;
- Distingués participants;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Je tiens avant toute chose, à vous présenter les excuses du Ministre de l'Environnement et des Ressources Forestières du Togo qui aurait bien voulu être parmi nous. Mais son calendrier chargé et les empêchements de dernière minute ne lui ont pas permis de faire le déplacement de Libreville.

C'est donc en son nom et en celui du gouvernement togolais que je remercie, le gouvernement gabonais pour tous les efforts déployés afin de faire de nos assises une réussite.

Je voudrais remercier particulièrement le PNUE pour les efforts consentis pour la mise en oeuvre de la Convention d'Abidjan par nos pays.

Nos remerciements vont également à tous les organismes ici présents pour leurs multiples contributions à la réussite de cette septième Conférence.

La convention relative à la Coopération en matière de protection et de mise en valeur du milieu marin et des zones côtières de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre (WACAF Abidjan 1981), a été ratifiée par le Togo par la loi no. 83-17 du 20 juin 1984 et publiée par décret no. 84-9 du 2 janvier 1985. C'est à dire que le Togo a très pris conscience de l'importance de cette convention pour notre sous région.

Il lance donc un appel pressant aux pays qui ne l'ont pas encore fait à prendre et honorer cet engagement.

En effet, monsieur le président de la Conférence, la Convention devrait nous permettre dans un cadre concerté de:

1. Promouvoir le développement rationnel de la zone côtière;
2. Développer des capacités nationales pour la gestion de zone côtière et du milieu marin;
3. Prévenir et lutter contre la pollution marine;
4. Prévenir et lutter contre l'érosion côtière;
5. Développer des plans d'urgence en cas de pollution pétrolière marine.

De façon concrète, la Convention constitue pour nous, le cadre de concertation au niveau sous régional pour discuter des questions relatives à la gestion du milieu marin et rechercher les solutions qui s'imposent.

Spécifiquement pour le Togo, le cadre de la Convention a permis entre autres de:

Elaborer le profil environnemental du littoral du Togo,

- Participer à la phase 1 du Grand Ecosystème du Courant de Guinée et aussi à la phase 2 qui commence avec un projet de démonstration intitulé «Lutte contre la pollution de la mer par les boues de phosphates par application de la méthode de décantation et identification d'une stratégie de gestion durable»;
- Exécuter les deux premières phases du projet 'Réseau d'Echange de Données et d'Informations Océanographiques pour l'Afrique/Océan data Information for Africa' (ODINAFRICA).

Je me réjouis de l'opportunité que cette Conférence nous donne pour réaffirmer notre engagement commun en faveur de la Coopération en matière de protection et de développement de l'environnement marin et côtier de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Mesdames, Messieurs,

La délégation togolaise souhaite que les résolutions issues de cette Conférence soient largement diffusées et appuyées par les différents bailleurs de fonds comme le font déjà certains entre autres le PNUE afin de stimuler une mise en oeuvre plus efficace des actions de préservation et de mise en valeur du milieu marin et de la zone côtière dans les pays partis à cette Convention.

Nous félicitons également le groupe des experts pour le travail pour sortir un document de décisions soumis à l'appréciation des ministres.

Nous ne saurions terminer notre intervention sans remercier le Gouvernement de la Côte d'Ivoire qui abrite le siège du Secrétariat intérimaire de notre Convention et la FEM pour leurs efforts pour la promotion de cette Convention.

Je vous remercie.

12. Nigeria

Goodwill message from the Minister for Environment, Hon. Bada Mamde, delivered by Mr. Akin Awobamise, Zonal Director of the Federal Ministry of Environment

The Minister could not be here due to other National engagements requiring his attention. He has however asked me to extend his warm greetings to his Colleagues fellow Ministers at this meeting.

He further directed me to inform the gathering that Nigeria is fully committed to the objectives of the Abidjan Convention and supports all the initiatives aimed at getting it revitalised. He looks forward to the outcome of the meeting, which he hopes to bring to the Federal Executive Council meeting for consideration and necessary action.

Honoured Ministers,

On the issue of contribution, I am to inform you that as soon as the budgetary exercise in Nigeria is completed, Nigeria will aim at making her necessary contribution.

Finally the Minister congratulates Gabon on her ascension to chairmanship of the Convention and for hosting the COP7 and wishes to thank you and God bless.

13. Guinea

Déclaration du Chef de Cabinet du Ministère de l'Environnement de la Guinée, M. Mamady Conde

- Monsieur le Président;
- Messieurs les Ministres;
- Monsieur le Représentant du PNUE;
- Messieurs les Représentants des Gouvernements;
- Mesdames, Messieurs.

Je voudrais tout d'abord m'acquitter d'un devoir, c'est celui de vous transmettre le salut fraternel et amical de Hon. Cheik Abdel Kader Sangare, Ministre de l'Environnement de la République de Guinée qui pour des raisons indépendantes de sa volonté n'a pu être personnellement parmi nous.

Qu'il me soit permis ensuite d'exprimer les remerciements au nom de la délégation que je conduis, aux organisateurs de la 7^{ème} réunion de la Conférence des Parties Contractantes à la Convention d'Abidjan, pour la qualité de l'accueil digne de l'hospitalité africaine qui nous a été réservé.

- Monsieur le Président;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Au regard des multiples problèmes liés à la dégradation de l'environnement et pour endiguer les conséquences qui en découlent, le Gouvernement guinéen vient de créer le 4 octobre 2004, un Ministère chargé de la mise en œuvre de sa politique en matière d'environnement. Démontrant ainsi sa volonté de faire de la protection et de la gestion rationnelle de l'environnement une priorité nationale.

L'un des objectifs principaux de ce jeune département ministériel est la protection du milieu marin contre toutes formes de dégradation.

Et pour ce faire, je puisse vous rassurer que des efforts louables ont été consentis notamment:

- l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre du Décret relatif à la préservation du milieu marin contre toutes les formes de pollution;
- l'élaboration du Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement de la Mangrove qui a abouti à la réalisation d'un projet pilote sur le littoral dénommé Projet de gestion des mangroves dans la baie de Sangareah;
- et surtout, la Guinée est partie contractante à la Convention d'Abidjan et de son Protocole relatif à la coopération en matière de protection et de gestion du milieu marin et des zones côtières.

Très malheureusement, les impacts négatifs des activités humaines demeurent toujours sur les écosystèmes marin et terrestre et suscitent des conflits autour de ces ressources.

- Monsieur le Président;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Compte tenu du travail déjà réalisé dans le cadre du programme de cette Convention, il serait important que nous ayons une idée claire de nos objectifs et de nos futures interventions. Pour cela, les Parties doivent créer et renforcer les Points Focaux Nationaux et mettre en place un mécanisme financier durable pour assurer la mise en œuvre efficace de la Convention et de son Protocole.

Une Unité Régionale de Coordination et un Bureau plus dynamique et actif sont indispensables si nous voulons atteindre nos objectifs. Ce Bureau en liaison avec le Forum des Points Focaux Nationaux, se consacrera à la mobilisation des ressources financières et humaines nécessaires pour assurer au minimum la réalisation des activités proposées au Programme de travail 2005-2007.

Dans tous les cas, un programme régional demeure la principale action qui soit susceptible de renforcer les mesures nationales et résoudre de manière efficace, les problèmes du milieu marin et côtier dans notre région notamment les projets et programmes des trois Grands Ecosystèmes Marins du Courant de Guinée, de Canari, et de Benguela.

- Monsieur le Président;
- Messieurs les Ministres;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Pour ma part, et au nom de Hon. Cheik Abdel Kader Sangare, Ministre de l'Environnement de la Guinée, je réitère la volonté manifeste du Gouvernement, de soutenir le processus de revitalisation de la Convention d'Abidjan qui reste un instrument exemplaire de coopération régionale pour les pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Vive la coopération internationale.

Je vous remercie.

14. **Gambia**

Speech by Gambia's Focal Point for the Abidjan Convention, Mr. Saikou B. M. Njai

- Honoured Ministers;
- Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen;
- My dear colleagues.

First I would like to extend the sincere apologies of my Minister's Secretary of State for Fisheries, Natural Resources and the Environment, Hon. Bai Mass Taal, for not being with you today. As a veteran environmentalist I am sure wherever he is right now, his mind will be with you.

Mr Chairman,

This Convention is very important to the Gambia with a coastline of 50 km and the river covering 1/5 of our land, the marine and coastal environment is a priority area in the socio-economic development of the country. Since 1994, the Gambia Government has taken major policy decisions geared towards the protection and management of the coastal and marine environment.

We often overstate the cost of managing our environment and undervalue the cost of not managing our environment. Environment management and development are inextricably linked. We need to leave no stone unturned to ensure this Convention is revitalised and endeavour to implement the current work programme.

15. **Vote of thanks**

Read by the Minister for the Environment and the protection of Nature, Senegal, Hon. Modou Diagne Fada

Les participants à la Septième Conférence des parties à la Convention d'Abidjan (COP 7) tenu du 22 et 23 mars 2005 à Libreville, Gabon.

Remercient le Président de la République Gabonaise, son Gouvernement, le Ministre de l'Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche, de l'Environnement chargé de la Protection de la Nature, le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement (PNUE) et le Peuple Gabonais pour leur hospitalité et la qualité de l'accueil qui leur a été réservé tout au long de leur séjour, dans cette magnifique ville de Libreville.

Estiment que de telles rencontres contribuent très avantageusement à l'intégration régionale d'une part, et à la mise en œuvre des missions dorénavant dévolues à la Convention d'Abidjan, dans le cadre de son mandat d'autre part.

Ils remercient également le comité d'organisation et le personnel de l'hôtel pour la qualité du service et la rapidité des prestations.

16. Gabon: Closing statement

Discours de clôture par le Ministre Délégué Alexandre Barro Chambrier, Chef de délégation en lieu et place du Ministre Emile Doumba, Ministre de Economie Forestière, des Eaux, de la Pêche, de l'Environnement chargé de la Protection de la Nature

- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ministres, Chers Collègues;
- Monsieur le Représentant du Directeur Exécutif du Programme des Nations Unies pour l'Environnement;
- Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs et Représentants du Corps Diplomatique;
- Mesdames et Messieurs les Représentants des Organisations Internationales;
- Distingués invités;
- Mesdames et Messieurs.

Nous voici arrivés au terme des travaux de la 7ème Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan sur la Coopération en matière de protection et de développement de l'environnement marin et côtier de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Je voudrais avant tout me réjouir du climat de sérénité, de compréhension mutuelle et de responsabilité qui a prévalu tout au long de nos travaux. Ce contexte a facilité les échanges qui ont abouti aux importantes décisions que nous venons de prendre au cours de nos assises.

Je profite de la circonstance pour saluer nos éminents experts à qui j'adresse nos vives et sincères félicitations pour le travail accompli.

Les conclusions des travaux du Segment Ministériel qui viennent de nous être présentées traduisent la détermination de nos Etats à conduire une politique résolue de protection et de développement de l'environnement marin et côtier de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre. Elles témoignent également de leur volonté de redynamiser la Convention d'Abidjan.

Excellences,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au moment où le Gabon a l'insigne honneur et la lourde responsabilité d'assurer, pour les deux années à venir, la présidence de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention d'Abidjan, je voudrais réaffirmer l'engagement du Gouvernement de la République Gabonaise, conduit par Monsieur Jean-François Ntoutoume-Emane, Premier Ministre, Chef du Gouvernement, sous la haute Direction de Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat, à poursuivre l'action engagée sous la Présidence ivoirienne en vue de la redynamisation de la Convention d'Abidjan.

A cet égard, nous sommes assurés de bénéficier de l'esprit visionnaire du Président Bongo Ondimba et son exceptionnel tissu de relations. Je souhaiterais indiquer quelques-unes des mesures qui s'inscrivent dans le cadre de ce processus et qui ont fait l'objet d'un consensus au cours de nos assises. Il est en effet essentiel que les pays ayant adhéré à la Convention conduisent le processus à son terme.

Je me réjouis également des engagements pris par l'ensemble des pays à honorer le plus régulièrement possible leurs contributions financières. Nous devons avant tout compter sur nos propres ressources si nous voulons obtenir le soutien de la communauté internationale. Par ailleurs, nous avons ensemble décidé de renforcer le rôle des points focaux qui devront être à même de mieux assurer le suivi de nos recommandations.

A ce stade de nos considérations, il me plait de remercier l'Agence Suédoise de Coopération Internationale pour son appui qui permettra la mise en place d'un mécanisme de coordination efficace. Il s'agit d'une priorité dans le cadre du programme d'action 2005-2007.

Parmi les autres éléments de notre plan d'action, nous pouvons citer:

- la création de bases de données et de réseaux d'échange au niveau régional qui améliorera notre connaissance de l'environnement marin et côtier et contribuera au renforcement de nos capacités de mise en œuvre de la Convention;

- le développement des synergies entre les institutions, programmes et projets en cours dans notre région qui participera au renforcement de la Convention et, ce faisant, à la politique d'intégration régionale que nos Chefs d'Etat appellent de tous leurs vœux, dans un élan de solidarité agissante et d'intérêts mutuels.

Pour mener à bien le programme de travail ambitieux que nous venons d'adopter pour la période 2005-2007, la Présidence Gabonaise sollicite, de la part de l'ensemble des pays membres, le soutien nécessaire à la réussite de son mandat.

Qu'il me soit permis, en considération de ce qui précède, de lancer un vibrant appel à la communauté internationale pour qu'elle renforce son appui à la mise en œuvre du Plan d'Action de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre, encore appelé WACAF, régi par la Convention d'Abidjan.

Excellences,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au moment où nos travaux s'achèvent, je voudrais adresser, au nom du Gouvernement gabonais et au mien propre, un hommage mérité à notre collègue, Angèle Gnonsoa, Ministre d'Etat, Chargée de l'Environnement de la République de Côte d'Ivoire, qui a assuré la Présidence de la Conférence des Parties, pour la qualité et la densité du travail qu'elle a accompli au cours de son mandat.

Au nom de tous mes Collègues, Ministres de l'Environnement de la zone WACAF, je voudrais lui renouveler notre profonde gratitude et lui adresser nos vifs et sincères remerciements pour les efforts qu'elle n'a cessé de déployer à cet effet.

Aussi, souhaiterions-nous pouvoir toujours compter sur sa grande expérience et ses conseils avisés pour le rayonnement de notre Institution.

Mesdames et messieurs,

Distingués Invités,

Avant de terminer mon propos, il me plaît de remercier au nom du Président de la République, Chef de l'Etat, tous nos invités qui ont fait le déplacement de Libreville, et de leur souhaiter un bon retour dans leurs pays respectifs et dans leurs familles, en espérant que leur séjour en terre gabonaise aura été des plus agréables.

Je déclare clos, les travaux de la 7^{ème} Conférence des parties à la Convention d'Abidjan relative à la Coopération en matière de protection et de développement de l'environnement marin et côtier de la région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre.

Vive la Convention d'Abidjan,

Vive la Coopération Régionale,

Vive la Coopération Internationale,

Je vous remercie.

Annex VII

Report of the Executive Director of UNEP

Background to the implementation of and activities under the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention)

I. Background

1. The Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region was signed in 1981 and came into force in 1984. The Convention is among 17 regional seas conventions and action plans that bring together over 150 coastal States and territories. In Africa, 30 of the sub-Saharan African countries are party to the Abidjan (1981) and Nairobi (1985) conventions. The Abidjan Convention area extends from Mauritania in the north to South Africa in the south, covering 22 African States with a coastline of over 14,000 km.
2. The Regional Seas conventions and action plans are comprehensive agreements that have been extraordinarily effective in engaging Governments in protecting the environment. The conventions cover a wide range of issues, ranging from pollution from land-based activities, chemicals and coastal development to the conservation of marine biodiversity and entire ecosystems.
3. The limited geographic focus of each convention or action plan enables the participating countries to channel the energies of a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups to solving interlinked problems and to address the relationship between the legal and biophysical dimensions of the coastal and marine environment.
4. The Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention exhibit differing governance structures, extreme political, social and economic variations within and between the countries. Consequently, each of the country responds to coastal and marine issues in different ways. The Abidjan Convention provides a mechanism for regional coordination and a framework for effective regional actions. The participating countries include: Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Africa and Togo.
5. The Convention covers countries that are rich in biodiversity and natural resources, the most important of which within the Convention area are fisheries, oil and gas, and minerals, including sand, limestone and diamonds. Tourism is a growing industry and an important contributor to the economy of the region. Coastal tourism is an important foreign exchange earner for such countries as the Gambia, Namibia and Senegal. In South Africa, tourism generates more than \$1.2 billion dollars annually, with over 20 million international and domestic visitors to coastal areas each year.
6. One consequence of the region's rich biodiversity and abundant resources is the intense development of industrial activities along the coastlines for all the 22 countries that are party to the Abidjan Convention. The coastal areas are densely populated and rapidly industrializing. In many coastal States within the Convention area, about half the population live within 100 km of the coastline. The coastal and marine environment is therefore facing a multitude of problems stemming from unplanned urbanization, poor regulatory regimes, and the use of inappropriate gear and quotas in fisheries. In addition, the selective harvesting of preferred species and the harvesting of small-size classes and reproductive females are leading to the over-exploitation of fish-stocks. At the same time, intense rates of mineral exploitation are causing the widespread destruction of critical habitats in the coastal areas with associated effects on living resources.
7. With the increasing number of environmentally related, national, regional and international initiatives, programmes and projects on the marine and coastal environment, the need for an effective coordination mechanism in the Convention area cannot be over-emphasized. The challenge is how to re-invent and re-tool the Abidjan Convention as an effective vehicle for sustainable development, in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

8. To address this new focus, the objectives for the Abidjan convention have been reconfigured, with a view to placing more emphasis on, first, raising awareness of the economic values of coastal and marine resources and the threats to marine living resources and their ecological role in the oceans; and, second, strengthening regional coordination mechanisms and building an effective regional framework for actions designed to stem the further degradation of the marine environment and to reverse the degradation and destruction of critical habitats. The Abidjan Convention is therefore expected to play a coordinating role in the implementation of a series of intervention projects that will support the NEPAD process in the implementation of the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative.

9. In response to these new realities and needs, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) have developed a support programme aimed at improving the coordination mechanism in the Convention area. The objectives of the programme include establishing coordination with other conventions and partners and developing a work programme for the assessment and management of coastal ecosystems, as well as on other related social and economic issues. The aim is to set in place an effective coordination mechanism based on the premise that priority thematic issues have geographical influence that may best be addressed through an effective and strong coordination centre.

II. Structure and peculiarities of the ecosystems on the Atlantic coast of Africa

10. The Abidjan Convention area straddles three distinct ecosystems, namely; the Benguela current large marine ecosystem, the Guinea current large marine ecosystem and the Canary current large marine ecosystem. The countries bordering the Canary Current ecosystem in the northern region, such as Senegal, Mauritania and others, and those bordering the Benguela current ecosystem in the southern region, namely, Angola, Namibia and South Africa, are heavily influenced by the desert conditions of their respective hinterlands. The countries sharing the Guinea current ecosystem, on the other hand, are characterized by humid tropical conditions.

A. Canary current large marine ecosystem

11. The Canary current large marine ecosystem is characterized by a major upwelling of deep, cold oceanic waters off the Canary Islands. The upwelling progresses in easterly and southerly directions, gradually dispersing over the continental shelf off Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and, to a lesser extent, Sierra Leone, as well as around the Cape Verde islands.

12. This nutrient-rich upwelling in the Canary current stimulates high biological productivity that results in an abundance of both pelagic and demersal fishery resources, including mackerel, tuna, and crustaceans. Such richness and diversity is well evident in the Baie de Levrier and the Banc d'Arguin of Mauritania (Gueye, 2001).

13. With many of these fishery resources shared among the countries in the subregion, management of the fisheries to ensure sustainability is therefore a matter of prime concern. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which enjoins countries to take collective actions to manage shared fish-stocks, is therefore of particular significance in this subregion. The subregion already has a strong and functional subregional fisheries management body, Commission sous-régionale des pêches or Subregional Fisheries Commission (CSRFP), of which all the coastal countries are members. Joint fishery assessment surveys and surveillance of the fishery waters are undertaken under the auspices of the Commission.

14. The major environmental problems facing the marine and brackish water coastal segments of the Canary current large marine ecosystem, include pollution and eutrophication, declining water quality, particularly in inshore areas and leading to degradation of the coastal habitats, and public health risks from contaminated drinking water.

15. The countries that share the Canary current large marine ecosystem share common concerns and have gained considerable experience working together. Accordingly, they have requested a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded large marine ecosystem project. The GEF project has been approved for execution by FAO. The overall objective of the Canary current large marine ecosystem project is to secure global environmental benefits by protecting the ecosystem from degradation caused by over fishing and pollution.

B. Guinea current large marine ecosystem

16. The Guinea current large marine ecosystem extends from Bissagos island (Guinea-Bissau) in the north and includes Cape Lopez (Gabon) in the south. The ecosystem area is considered to include the exclusive economic zones of 16 countries, namely, Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone and Togo.

17. The Guinea current region, and in particular its central part, faces a number of challenges involving population growth and urbanization, fisheries depletion, water pollution, public health and sanitation, habitat degradation, coastal erosion, loss of biological diversity and land-use. Although the coastline is subject to high natural erosion and sedimentation processes due to such phenomena as wave action and strong littoral transport, etc., erosion has also been intensified by human activities, notably through sand extraction, port construction, dredging, mangrove deforestation and alterations to flow regimes from dam construction (for irrigation and power generation). Nearly all major cities, agricultural plantations, harbours, airports and industries, as well as other parts of the social-and economic infrastructure in the region, are located at or near the coast.

18. Many of the countries in the subregion are oil producers, with Angola, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria as net exporters. The number of offshore platforms and various export and import oil terminals inevitably means that the region is heavily exposed to oil pollution. Oil spills associated with the offshore operations, with the possible resulting pollution of continental shelf waters from hydrocarbons, could easily develop into a regional problem. Offshore oil and gas reserves and activities have led to long-standing disputes between some neighbouring States, especially those bordering the Bight of Biafra (namely Cameroon, Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea).

19. The Guinea current large marine ecosystem is rich in living marine resources, with the fishing industry providing livelihood for thousands of fishermen and foreign exchange for the countries. The fishery resources are exploited by both artisanal and industrial fishing fleets, the latter being made up of both local and foreign flag vessels. Generally, over 60 per cent of national fish landings in the subregion are made by artisanal fishermen.

20. The major components of the GEF-funded Guinea current large marine ecosystem project include:

- (a) Recovery and sustainability of depleted fisheries and living marine resources including mariculture;
- (b) Planning for biodiversity conservation, restoration of degraded habitats and developing strategies to reduce coastal erosion;
- (c) Reducing land and sea-based pollution and improving water quality; and
- (d) Regional coordination and institutional sustainability.

C. Benguela current large marine ecosystem

21. The Benguela current large marine ecosystem is situated along the coast of south-western Africa, stretching from Luanda (Angola) in the north southwards to the east of the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa). Being one of the four major eastern boundary coastal upwelling ecosystems of the world, the ecosystem's distinctive bathymetry, hydrography, chemistry and trophodynamics combine to make the Benguela current large marine ecosystem one of the most productive ocean areas in the world.

22. The high level of primary productivity of the ecosystem supports an important global reservoir of biodiversity and biomass of zooplankton, fish, sea birds and marine mammals. Near-shore and off-shore sediments hold rich deposits of precious minerals (particularly diamonds), as well as oil and gas reserves. The natural beauty of the coastal regions, many of which are still pristine, have also enabled the development of significant tourism in some areas.

23. Many foreign fishing vessels operate off Angola and Namibia, resulting in severe depletion of the resources of the Benguela current large marine ecosystem.

24. The countries sharing the ecosystem are working together within the GEF-funded Benguela current large marine ecosystem project, which is being implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in the multi-national Benguela Environment Fisheries Interaction and Training (BENEFIT) research project. The threats and issues associated with the management of the ecosystem have been identified as including the following:

- (a) Increasing exploitation by industrial fisheries in the absence of an agreed long-term regional strategy for the management of the fishery resources;
- (b) Increasing human and ecosystem health problems caused by introduced species, especially of algae derived from ballast water, and other ship discharges of non-indigenous species;
- (c) Continuing mineral, oil and gas exploration and production, both offshore and in coastal areas, with their attendant pollution and consequent habitat degradation risks; and
- (d) Significant losses of biomass among higher order species of the ecosystem, most notably seabirds (penguins), whales, and seals.

25. The long-term objective of the Benguela current large marine ecosystem project is to bring about integrated, sustainable management and use of the resources, and also protection of the ecosystem itself. Provision has been made for the creation and implementation of a Benguela Current Commission to perform this regulatory function.

D. Respective focal areas and coordination arrangements of the three large marine ecosystems

26. The three large marine ecosystems address similar issues on biodiversity and fisheries but have different focal areas. The Canary and Benguela areas focus mainly on fisheries, the Guinea current area places priority on pollution both from land-based sources and oil and gas exploration and production and on coastal processes like erosion. Even between the Canary and Benguela areas there are considerable differences: thus, artisanal fisheries feature prominently in the Canary current large marine ecosystem alongside the industrial fisheries, while industrial fisheries are of primary concern in the Benguela current large marine ecosystem. The focus and the targets of interventions in each large marine ecosystem reflect the priorities of the countries that share three large marine ecosystem projects and, conversely, the three large marine ecosystems represent the priorities of the Abidjan Convention area.

27. The Abidjan Convention will therefore reorient its coordination structures to provide effective action-oriented service to each country within the large marine ecosystems, based on the natural grouping of the countries. The large marine ecosystem groupings require a lead agency in each participating country and a regional coordination unit to provide a linkage between the implementing agencies and the participating countries across the convention area. For the further development of an effective coordination mechanism, the regional coordination unit will establish national task teams led by a senior government officer – the focal point – from all participating countries, to implement aspects of the work programme of the Abidjan Convention based on the peculiarities of each large marine ecosystem.

28. The countries hosting the three large marine ecosystem projects will act as information centres, tracking the progress of the three large marine ecosystems. This will ensure effective collaboration between the large marine ecosystem projects and the Regional Coordination Unit based in Côte d'Ivoire.

III. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and implementation of the NEPAD component of the action plan on marine and coastal environment

29. The leading objective of the African Process for the Protection and Management of the Marine Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa was to revitalize the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions. The outcome of the African Process was integrated into NEPAD and the network of African experts established during the African Process will work closely with the various African experts in support of the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions to implement the action plan for the NEPAD environment initiative, particularly with regard to the marine and coastal environment.

30. The intergovernmental process under the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions remains the best channel for implementing the programme of interventions and projects of the African Process under the direction of the NEPAD interim secretariat.

31. During the meeting to launch the implementation mechanism for the NEPAD coastal and marine component (Dakar, Senegal, 24 and 25 October 2002), it was agreed that institutional arrangements for the priority areas of the NEPAD environment initiative would be decided on a case-by-case basis, with a view to using as far as possible existing mechanisms. It was further agreed that, for the marine and coastal component, NEPAD would use the implementation mechanisms of the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions.

32. In a meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 24 and 25 February 2003, during the finalization workshop on coastal marine and freshwater resources, participants also noted the need for NEPAD to use the implementation mechanisms of the Nairobi and Abidjan convention to avoid creating new structures.

33. The overall objective of the coastal marine and freshwater resources programme area for NEPAD is to support the implementation of the objectives of the Abidjan and Nairobi conventions and contribute to the implementation in an integrated manner of the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development relating, in particular, to the management of Africa's coastal and marine resources.

34. Work in this programme area also aims at assisting African countries to implement the relevant provisions of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Sources and to support the activities set out in the Montreal Work Programme for the period 2002–2006, including the strategic action plan on municipal wastewater.

IV. Implementation of the decisions adopted on 16 May 2002 by the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention

35. At the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in May 2002, the Contracting Parties requested the Regional Coordination Unit and the Bureau, in collaboration with UNEP, to take measures to urge countries in the region that were not yet Parties to the Convention to accede to or ratify it. It was decided, among other things, that the Chair of the Bureau of the Convention should undertake a mission to some of the countries in the region to encourage additional ratifications and to mobilize contributions to the Trust Fund.

36. Accordingly, Ms. Angèle Gnonsoa, Minister of Environment of Côte d'Ivoire, Chair of the Bureau of the Convention, Ms. Nasseré Kaba, interim Coordinator, and a consultant, Mr. Kwame Koranteng, undertook missions to Senegal, Mauritania, Gabon, Namibia and Angola between 4 and 22 September 2004.

37. The outcome of the missions is summarized in the following sections.

A. Senegal

38. In the framework of the mission, meetings were held with the following officials in Senegal:

- (a) Prime Minister;
- (b) Minister of Environment;
- (c) Director of Environment;
- (d) Focal point of the Abidjan Convention; and
- (e) Executive Secretary of the interim secretariat of the environment component of NEPAD (SINEPAD).

39. At those meetings, deliberations centred on the following issues:

- (a) Senegal's contribution to the emerging coordination mechanism as a possible node for the Canary current sub region;
- (b) Working relationships between SINEPAD and the Regional Coordinating Unit in the implementation of the ocean sub-component of the NEPAD environmental action plan;

(c) South-South cooperation in sharing experiences relating to environmental issues such as sanitation and invasive species; and

(d) Effective involvement of non-governmental organizations in marine and coastal development programmes.

40. The Prime Minister reiterated the importance of the Abidjan Convention in protecting and developing marine and coastal environment of western and central Africa. The Senegalese authorities renewed their unflinching support for the Convention and the current process to revitalize it and pledged their country's commitment to contributing to that process. The Prime Minister also promised to take up the issue of Senegal's contribution to the Trust Fund.

41. It was also agreed that the interim Coordinator of the Regional Coordinating Unit and the Executive Secretary of NEPAD should establish a close working relationship on marine and coastal issues.

B. Mauritania

42. In the framework of the mission, meetings were held with the following officials in Mauritania:

- (a) Head of State;
- (b) Minister of Environment and Fisheries;
- (c) Minister for Foreign Affairs; and
- (d) Director of Environment.

43. At the meetings, deliberations focused primarily on the need for the country to ratify the Abidjan Convention and other matters as enumerated above. The Head of State gave instructions to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to bring the ratification procedure to its conclusion.

44. The visit by the Chair to Mauritania was given a very high profile and lent considerable diplomatic importance, with extensive coverage by the country's electronic and print media.

C. Gabon

45. In the framework of the mission, meetings were held with the following officials in Gabon:

- (a) Outgoing Vice-Minister in charge of Environment;
- (b) Incoming Vice-Minister in charge of Environment; and
- (c) Director-General of Environment.

46. From the discussions, which centred on modalities for the organization of the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties and for contributions to the Trust Fund, the Chair was assured of Gabon's preparedness to host the meeting of the Contracting Parties and informed that the authorities were looking forward to further consultation with the secretariat on such issues as the date, venue and other modalities.

D. Cape Verde

47. Ms. Gnonsoa and the interim Coordinator met the Ambassador of Cape Verde in Senegal and held very fruitful discussions with him. The Ambassador indicated the importance that his country attached to the Abidjan Convention and the desire to ratify it. He expressed the hope that the Chair would be able to visit Cape Verde at a later date.

E. Namibia

48. In Namibia, the interim Coordinator and the consultant met and held discussions with senior officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism who had been mandated to represent their minister. The discussions with the Namibian authorities centred on the need for Namibia to ratify the Abidjan Convention, the nomination of a focal point and the achievements of the Convention and its action plan in the past.

49. At the end of the discussions, the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism saw the need for their ministry to take a lead role in the affairs of the Abidjan Convention. They indicated that they would brief the Minister and initiate the action necessary for immediate ratification of the Convention.

F. Angola

50. The interim Coordinator and the consultant met the UNDP Resident Representative in Luanda. From the discussions with UNDP Resident Representative it appears that the environment is regarded as a high priority area in Angola. The coastal and marine environment is very important for the country because of its rich fisheries resources and the oil industry. The Resident Representative recommended that all documents intended for Angola should, as far as possible, be in Portuguese if they were to receive the necessary attention.

51. The mission concluded that the apparent low level or non-existent participation of the Angolan authorities in the Abidjan Convention was the result of the lack of information on the Convention available to Angola because of the language barrier.

V. Activities within the Regional Coordinating Unit in Abidjan

52. UNEP signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Environment of Côte d'Ivoire covering a series of activities, namely, to provide support for the operations of the Unit and for the establishment of a network of national focal points. The specific activities are summarized in the following sections.

A. Establishing a network of focal points and organizing a focal point forum

53. A forum of focal points of the Abidjan Convention was held at the Erata Hotel in Accra, Ghana, from 24 to 26 November 2004. The objective of the forum was to prepare a detailed and realistic work programme for the period 2005–2007, for presentation to the Contracting Parties at their seventh meeting, in Gabon, in February 2005, in accordance with the Parties' decision at their sixth meeting. The work programme would be implemented within the framework of the NEPAD environmental component and its platform for the management of the marine and coastal resources of Western Africa.

54. The forum discussed and agreed on the formal establishment of the focal points network to support the operation of the Regional Coordinating Unit. Terms of reference for focal points and for the focal point forum of the Convention were drafted and presented during the forum and will be submitted for adoption to the Contracting Parties at their next meeting; The forum also entrusted the secretariat with the establishment of task teams to follow up on the implementation of the work programme, in order to support the operation of the Regional Coordinating Unit.

B. Coordination of programmes

55. On 13 October 2004, Ms. Gnonsoa, in her capacity as Chair of the Bureau of the Abidjan Convention, wrote to all ministers of environment within the West and Central African region and requested each Government to designate or confirm their national focal point for the Abidjan Convention. On the basis of responses received, the directory of national focal points was updated and the supporting national institutions of the Abidjan Convention were listed.

C. Consultations with Parties to the Abidjan Convention

56. On 24 June 2004, Ms. Gnonsoa wrote to the ministers responsible for implementation of the Abidjan Convention, urging them to make efforts to secure additional ratifications of the Convention and to pay their contributions to the Trust Fund.

D. Ratifications

57. As detailed in paragraphs 35–51 above, the Chair of the Bureau of the Abidjan Convention, the interim Coordinator and a consultant visited Angola, Gabon, Mauritania, Namibia and Senegal, with a view to promoting additional ratifications of the Convention and to mobilizing the necessary political will. Between 2002 and 2005, over the period since the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties, there have been two new ratifications of the Convention, namely, by Benin and South Africa. Namibia and Mauritania have expressed their willingness to ratify the Convention.

E. Fund-raising and resource mobilization

58. As detailed in paragraphs 35–51 above, the secretariat for the Abidjan Convention organized a high-level visit to Angola, Gabon, Namibia and Senegal, to mobilize contributions to the Trust Fund. Since the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties, the Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal and South Africa have paid their contributions to the Trust Fund. In addition, the joint secretariat for the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions at UNEP has obtained financial support from SIDA to strengthen the Convention's coordination mechanism.

F. Partnerships

59. The Abidjan Convention and the Regional Coordinating Unit have approached various institutions and agencies and established partnerships with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and cooperation with the large marine ecosystem projects for the Canary, Guinea and Benguela currents. Representatives of all these projects participated in and contributed to the development of the work plan for the Abidjan Convention.

G. Meetings mission undertaken in support of the Convention by the interim Coordinator

60. The Interim Coordinator represented the Abidjan Convention at the following meetings:

- (a) Working group on the Nairobi Convention work programme 2004–2005, held in Nairobi, in March 2004;
- (b) Fourth meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention, held in Antananarivo, Madagascar, in July 2004;
- (c) Meeting on arrangements for the financing of the action plan of the NEPAD environment initiative, on the example of the marine and coastal sub-component, held in Dakar from 12 to 15 October 2004;
- (d) Fifth and sixth global meetings on the regional seas programmes, held in Nairobi and Istanbul, respectively, from 26–28 November 2003 and 30 November–2 December 2004.

VI. 2005–2007 work programme for the Abidjan Convention

61. As detailed in paragraphs 53 and 54 above, the forum of focal points of the Abidjan Convention was held at the Erata Hotel in Accra, from 24 to 26 November 2004. The objective of the forum was to prepare a detailed and realistic work programme for the period 2005–2007, for submission to the Contracting Parties at their seventh meeting, in Gabon, in February 2005, in accordance with the Parties' decision at their sixth meeting.

62. The proposed 2005–2007 work programme for the Abidjan Convention takes into consideration the following needs:

- (a) Need for a renewed commitment from Governments;
- (b) Need for a sustainable financing mechanism; and
- (c) Need for a strong and effective coordination mechanism.

63. The primary challenge facing implementation of a new work programme for the period 2005–2007 is the need to overcome the problem of inadequate financial resources, to strengthen coordination and to implement catalytic activities. Accordingly, the 2005–2007 work programme will incorporate activities designed to strengthen the coordination mechanism over the period 2005–2007, with support from SIDA and the Global Programme of Action. The coordination structure will respond to the need to establish task forces as necessary, and to use the large marine ecosystems as the basis for a nodal framework for addressing the priorities of the participating countries

64. Finally, the work programme will support the establishment of regional centres in some participating countries within the Convention area, so as to facilitate the implementation of action plans and to link-up with existing activities and programmes of other agencies and organizations, such as the Ocean Data and Information Network for Africa (ODINAFRICA), SINEPAD, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO), IMO, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), WWF and projects on large marine ecosystems.

VII. Conclusions

65. While the process of revitalizing the Abidjan Convention is on track, the rapid development of environment-related programmes in the region has meant that the coordination and sharing of information on activities has become complex and competitive. Consequently, it is essential that the Regional Coordinating Unit be strengthened and an effective subregional support structure put in place to facilitate closer coordination. Such a structure will help decentralize implementation by bringing the coordination function closer to the centres of activity of the large marine ecosystem projects. A ready option to this end is to consider the large marine ecosystems as the natural groupings for the subregional information centres.

66. The 2005–2007 work programme is in line with several relevant programmes currently under way within UNEP and other collaborating partners in the Western African region. These programmes include the UNEP regional seas strategic directions for 2004-2007; the SIDA -supported project to strengthen the coordination mechanism, management and assessment activities within the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions over the period 2003–2006; and the GEF large marine ecosystem projects for the Benguela, Canary and Benguela currents. During the process of preparing this work programme, all the completed activities of the last two work programmes and new initiatives being launched by other agencies of the United Nations system and by other partners, including non-governmental organizations, have been taken into account.

Annex VIII

Terms of reference for the Abidjan Convention Focal Points

Responsibilities of the Focal Points Forum

1. The Focal Points Forum should:
 - (a) Actively promote the objectives and implementation of the work plan of the Abidjan Convention and other complementary activities;
 - (b) Prepare the work-plan and the budget of the Abidjan Convention for approval by the meeting of the Contracting Parties; in the preparation of the work-plan, the Forum should take into account and ensure coordination with the activities of partners of the Abidjan Convention;
 - (c) Provide guidance and advice to the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention;||
 - (d) Identify issues that require the establishment of task forces, or the development of activities in cases where task forces have already been established; it should also develop terms of reference for those task forces and monitor their progress;
 - (e) Oversee the implementation of regional programmes within the framework of the Abidjan Convention;
 - (f) Identify, initiate, develop and endorse regional project proposals for presentation to potential partners;
 - (g) Act as a platform for information sharing and exchange;
 - (h) Provide technical and scientific advice and develop scientifically informed policy recommendations for presentation to the meeting of the Contracting Parties.

Responsibilities of the Focal Points

2. National Focal Points for the Abidjan Convention shall be selected from the ministries responsible for environment or any other ministry which serves as a focal point for UNEP.
3. Focal Points shall be senior Government officials whose selection is based on their extensive knowledge and experience of matters relating to the Abidjan Convention. Thus, the Focal Point should:
 - (a) Coordinate information flow from national institutions, non-governmental organizations and local bilateral and multilateral projects and ensure the dissemination of information to and within the Convention area;
 - (b) Establish links to other multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations and relevant conventions; also, the Focal Point must report to the meeting of the Contracting Parties through the Focal Points Forum of the Abidjan Convention on areas of synergy and complementarity between the work plans of all conventions at the national level;
 - (c) Ensure intersectoral coordination in the implementation of all activities approved by the meeting of the Contracting Parties;
 - (d) Serve as the channel for all formal communication between the secretariat and the Governments and national collaborating institutions and task force members;
 - (e) Participate in the preparation of biennial work plans as national expert and ensure preparation and submission of reports on the implementation of biennial work plans and reports on relevant activities implemented at the national level by Government departments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations;
 - (f) Coordinate the preparation of the national state of the marine and coastal environment report as a contribution to the regional report to the meeting of the Contracting Parties;
 - (g) Participate in or ensure adequate representation at the meetings of the Focal Points Forum at least once every year and at the meetings of the Contracting Parties;
 - (h) Participate in all resource mobilization activities in consultation with the responsible Vice-Chair and ensure regular and timely contributions by participating Governments to the West and Central African Action Plan Trust Fund of the Abidjan Convention;
 - (i) Promote public awareness programmes on all issues relating to activities within the framework of the Abidjan Convention;
 - (j) Recognize and link with existing coordination structures of regional projects and programmes such as the large marine ecosystems coordination units;
 - (k) Create a multi-partner platform at the national level with the intention of ensuring synergies and intersectoral coordination of projects and programmes relevant to the accomplishment of the objectives of the Abidjan Convention.

Annex IX

Decisions of the seventh meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention)

The Contracting Parties to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention),

Noting with appreciation the Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the work of the secretariat and efforts made to develop a new work programme for 2005 to 2007,

Appreciative of the work and support of the Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the support granted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other partners,

Appreciative also of the political and financial support of each of the Contracting Parties to the Abidjan Convention;

Taking note of the UNEP Regional Seas Strategic Directions and the priorities and actions identified therein,

Noting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Action Plan for the Environment Initiative, and that the Abidjan Convention serves as a platform for the implementation of its subtheme on coastal and marine environment,

Noting also other global programmes and processes impacting the coastal and marine environment of the Convention area, including the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those agreed at the Millennium Summit that are described as the Millennium Development Goals, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,¹

Reiterating the need to strengthen the Regional Coordinating Unit as the operational secretariat in the region to ensure the effective implementation of the Abidjan Convention,

Recognizing the critical importance of the Abidjan Convention, its Protocol and its Action Plan as important instruments for the promotion of sustainable development in the region and the need for their continuous review within the global context,

Recalling past decisions of the meetings of the Contracting Parties, in particular those of the fifth and sixth meetings, on ratification and on sustainable mechanisms for financing which have not been fully implemented,

Reiterating the need for a renewed commitment from Governments of the Convention area through political action and sustained financial support,

Welcoming the action of the Republic of South Africa in acceding to the Abidjan Convention and noting the urgency for non-member countries within the Convention area to accede to the Convention and for signatories to ratify it,

Welcoming also the visit by the Chair of the Abidjan Convention to certain countries in the Convention area, notably Angola, Gabon, Mauritania, Namibia and Senegal, to mobilize contributions to the Trust Fund or ratification of the Abidjan Convention,

Welcoming further the action of certain Contracting Parties, Gambia, Senegal and South Africa, which have paid their contributions to the Trust Fund, and noting the urgent need for other Contracting Parties to comply with their assessed contributions in accordance with the annex to document UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.5/6 and the status report included in document UNEP(DEC)/WAF/CP.6/5,

¹ Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002*) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II. A.1 and corrigendum), chap I, resolution 2, annex).

Recognizing newly established partnerships with the International Maritime Organization, WWF, the United Nations Industrial Development Organizations and NEPAD and noting with satisfaction the existing cooperation with the three large marine ecosystems, the Benguela Current large marine ecosystem, the Canary Current large marine ecosystem and the Guinea Current large marine ecosystem,

Noting with appreciation the support granted by SIDA through UNEP to the Abidjan Convention to support and strengthen the coordination mechanism of the Convention,

Appreciative of the efforts of the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to develop a project to address major environmental concerns and resource management in small island developing States,

Decision CP.7/1 New work programme for 2005–2007

1. *Approve* the new work programme for 2005 to 2007 as set forth in annex V to the present report;

2. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to assist the Regional Coordinating Unit in harnessing the existing human and financial resources and in mobilizing support within and outside the region for the implementation of the programme of work for 2005 to 2007;

3. *Also request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to assist the Regional Coordinating Unit to become autonomous and equipped with the resources necessary for the effective discharge of its coordination function, and request the Bureau to work with UNEP to define the steps and mobilize the necessary means to attain that goal before the eighth meeting of the Contracting Parties;

4. *Further request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to continue to collaborate with other relevant institutions within and outside the region to ensure cooperation in the implementation of the programme of work;

5. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to implement country-specific programmes, subregional activities and actions in support of or complementary to the programme of work of the Abidjan Convention;

Decision CP.7/2 Coordination mechanism

1. *Adopt* the terms of reference for the Abidjan Convention Focal Points set forth in annex VIII to the present report;

2. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to further strengthen the Regional Coordinating Unit and the Implementation Committee as instruments for coordination and implementation of the programme of work and the general mandate of the Abidjan Convention in conformity with decision CP.6/2 of the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties relating to the strengthening of the institutional framework;

3. *Urge* Contracting Parties which have not designated focal points to do so expeditiously and also urge all Contracting Parties to strengthen their focal points for the effective implementation of the mandate of the Abidjan Convention;

4. *Request* the Regional Coordinating Unit to update regularly the directory of national focal points and the supporting national institutions within the region;

Decision CP.7/3 Ratification, accession and review of the Abidjan Convention

1. *Urge* countries which have not ratified the Abidjan Convention and its Protocol to expedite their action in that regard, in conformity with decision CP.6/1 of the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties;

2. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to assist the Regional Coordinating Unit in taking further measures to encourage those countries which have not ratified the Abidjan Convention and its Protocol to do so;

3. *Also request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to assist the Regional Coordinating Unit in facilitating and expediting the review of the Abidjan Convention and its Protocol, and also in initiating and completing the development of new protocols on land-based activities;

Decision CP.7/4 Financial mechanism and resource mobilization

1. *Urge* all Contracting Parties to pay their assessed contributions to the Trust Fund in conformity with decision CP.6/3 of the sixth meeting of the Contracting Parties;
2. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to assist the Regional Coordinating Unit in the development of new project proposals, partnerships and collaborations and in initiating innovative mechanisms for resource mobilization;

Decision CP.7/5 Establishment of new partnerships and development of project proposals

1. *Request* the Regional Coordinating Unit to work closely with NEPAD to ensure the implementation of the NEPAD Environmental Action Plan and particularly its subtheme on coastal and marine environment;
2. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to establish and strengthen linkages to support the work programmes and activities of the large marine ecosystems;
3. *Also request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to establish new partnerships and networks, including for the conservation of migratory species of wild animals such as small cetaceans and sirenians and against invasive alien species in the marine and coastal environment;
4. *Further request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to develop or facilitate as appropriate new project proposals, including funding requirements and possibilities, for consideration at the eighth meeting of the Contracting Parties;
5. *Urge* Contracting Parties and partners to provide support to the maximum extent possible and request the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to ensure sustainable funding for the development and implementation of projects to address major environmental and resource management concerns in small island developing States;
6. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to pursue new partnerships and coordination mechanisms on assessment and monitoring activities with relevant organizations and institutions;

Decision CP.7/6 Enhancing access to information, and awareness-raising

1. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to develop or organize, as appropriate, and in collaboration with partners in the Region, outreach, information and public awareness programmes and activities on marine and coastal environment issues;
 2. *Urge* the Contracting Parties to enhance and promote existing networks to enable national focal points to gather and disseminate information on activities of other relevant conventions and regions;
 3. *Request* the secretariat of the Abidjan Convention to facilitate new and innovative strategies and methods to enhance access to information, information-sharing and public participation in the region.
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