

Committee: African Union

Issue: Blue economy and sustainable development in the African Continent

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Position: Deputy President

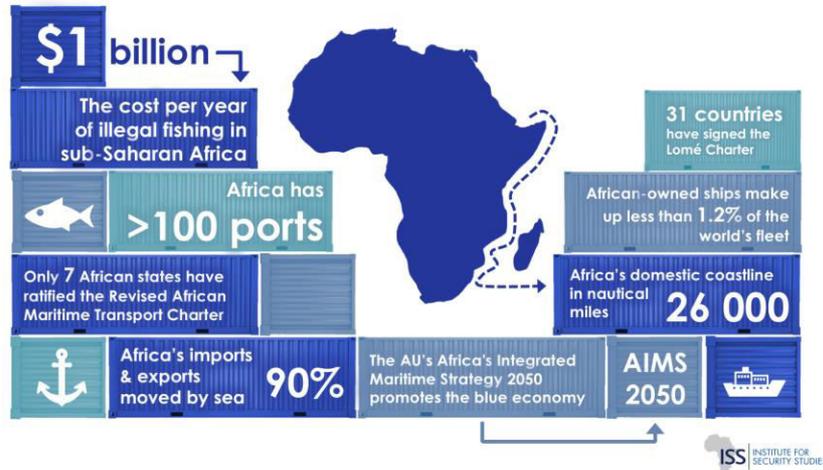
INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates, my name is Anna Protonotariou, I am 17 years old and I have the honour to be serving as the Deputy President of the African Union. If you have any questions concerning the topic, do not hesitate to contact me at protonotariou.anna@gmail.com.

Although Africa is the second largest and second most populous continent, it is the poorest continent on earth, with one fifth of its population considered malnourished. A large part of Africa's economic growth relies on numerous ocean-related activities and a number of various factors. Maritime zones under Africa's jurisdiction cover about 13 million square kilometers including approximately 6.5 million square kilometers over the continental shelf, equivalent to two thirds of Africa's landmass. Moreover, 38 of the 54 of the African States are coastal States. In addition, more than 90 % of trade is conducted by sea and the most strategic gateways for international trade are in Africa, underscoring the geopolitical importance of the region. If fully exploited and well managed, this hidden treasure

constitutes a major source of wealth that could catapult the continent's fortunes.

Africa's blue economy: prospects and pitfalls



DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Blue Economy

The 'Blue Economy' is an emerging concept which encourages better stewardship of our ocean or 'blue' resources.

The blue economy goes beyond viewing the ocean economy solely as a mechanism for economic growth. In the 'business-as-usual' model, large-scale industrial nations have seen the development of their ocean economies through the exploitation of maritime and marine resources – for example through the shipping, commercial fishing, oil, gas, mineral, and mining industries - often without a view to the effects their activities have on the future health or productivity of those same resources.

Similar to the 'Green Economy', the blue economy model aims for improvement of human wellbeing and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It provides for an inclusive model in which coastal states - which sometimes lack the capacity to manage their rich ocean resources - can begin to extend the benefit of those resources to all.

The blue economy is not just about market opportunities; it also provides for the protection and development of more intangible 'blue' resources such as traditional ways of life, carbon sequestration, and coastal resilience to help vulnerable states mitigate the

often-devastating effects of climate change. It supports all of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG14 'life below water', and recognizes that this will require ambitious, coordinated actions to sustainably manage, protect and preserve our ocean now, for the sake of present and future generations.

Figure 3: Blue Economy conceptual framework



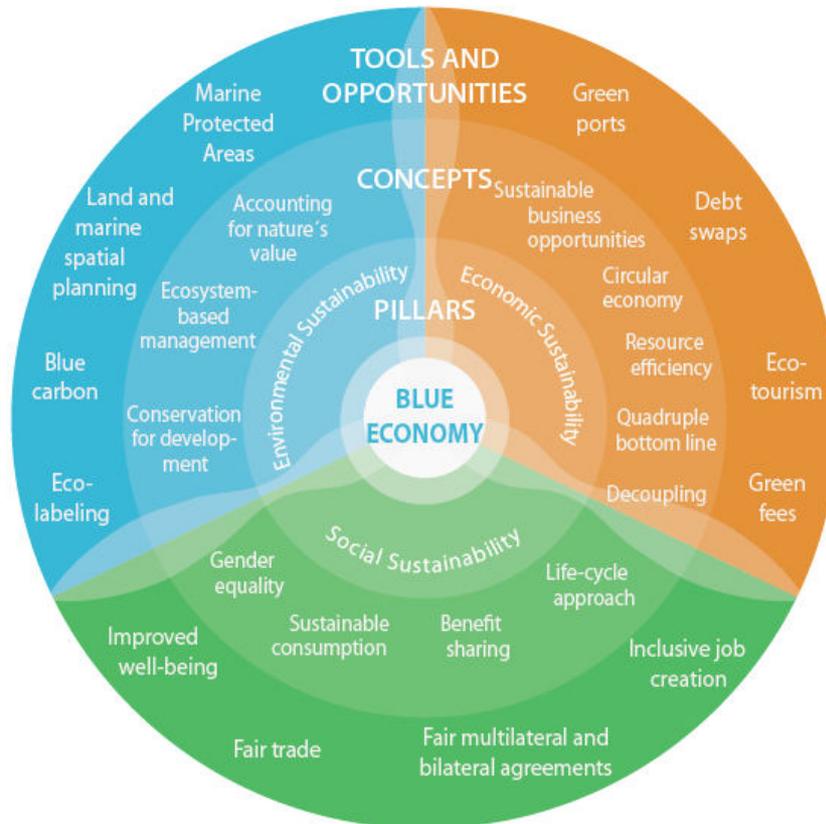
The United Nations has adopted ocean development as part of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, SDG 14 refers to “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.” In addition, the Blue Economy is interlinked with the majority of the SDGs in a variety of ways. Aquatic and marine resources play a crucial role in supporting an array of economic sectors that provide livelihoods and employment opportunities to end poverty (SDG 1). Figure 4 (see page 10) is a non-exhaustive list of linkages between Blue Economy development and the 17 SDGs.

Sustainable development

Defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), sustainable development has emerged as the guiding principle for long-term global development. Consisting of three pillars, sustainable development seeks to achieve, in a balanced manner, economic

development, social development and environmental protection, that is conducted without depletion of natural resources.

Figure 5: Tools, concepts, and pillars of the Blue Economy



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Blue Economy Concept

The Blue Economy is “The New Frontier of African Renaissance”, according to the African Union. The United Nations’ Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) recently released a handbook on how Africa can make the most of its vast coastal and freshwater resources. The Blue Economy in the African context covers both aquatic and marine spaces, including oceans, seas, coasts, lakes, rivers, and underground water. It encompasses a range of productive sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, shipbuilding, energy, bioprospecting, and underwater mining and related activities.

Continental Perspectives

Africa is developing fast and is showing some impressive progress. Despite Africa’s rich resource endowments, the continent still suffers from large-scale poverty, with 46 percent of the population living in extreme poverty. Furthermore, growth has generally not been accompanied by broad-based social progress and structural transformation of the economy. While the continent is experiencing a rising middle class, a large part of the population is still unemployed, and populations are suffering from a widespread unequal distribution of wealth. Around USD 42 billion per year leaves the continent through illegal fishing and illegal logging, among other causes. Tax havens in many jurisdictions are located in island States or territories.

African Union Involvement

The AU plays a crucial role in developing and implementing the Blue Economy policy and strategy in the African region. Over the past decade, the African Union Commission (AUC) has built an enlarged Africa-wide consensus regarding the critical role that the Blue Economy could play in fostering structural transformation in Africa during the next decade. This is encapsulated in the African Union’s 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AU 2050 AIMS). In addition, the Blue Economy is at the center of the AU’s Agenda 2063, at which it was unanimously declared to be “Africa’s future” and recognized as a catalyst for socioeconomic transformation. In July 2015, the African Union launched the African Day (25 July) and Decade of Seas and Oceans 2015–2025 to rally action on the Blue Economy.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Kenya

Kenya was ranked as the third fastest-growing economy in the world. The key to its success has been a strong blue exporting economy. Kenya's well-designed shipping infrastructure makes it a vastly superior exporter. The economic trend visible in Kenya is that even when production is comparatively low, a streamlined exportation system can cause a big economic boon. The new handbook by the ECA explains how African nations can use their coastal status to promote long-term growth. As in Kenya, the handbook emphasizes the blue economy involving shipping and other markets. The ECA calls for an update of maritime transportation to make Africa a center for global trade. An overarching theme of the handbook is sustainability, particularly the use of hydroelectric power over petroleum or coal. As expected, Kenya mirrors the ECA's suggestion, with 71 percent of national electricity coming from hydroelectric sources.

Madagascar

With its 4 823 km of coastline, Madagascar abounds in submarine wealth. Therefore A3-MADA, for the first time, launched a workshop on Blue Economy in Toliara on 20-22 March 2015 in order to build capacity and transfer knowledge obtained by Australia Awards to all stakeholders concerned by this field: decentralized collectivities, civil societies, and local linking communities in charge of environment and social monitoring, the people involved in tourism, marine transportation, fisherman association, Hotel and restaurant business, along with NGOs in the region.

Mauritius

Mauritius has been hailed as an example for other countries to follow in the Blue Economy sector. The strengths of the approach adopted by Mauritius lie in the establishment of a policy framework which was developed through broad-based consultations with all stakeholders, including civil society and the general public. This creates a unique sense of ownership in both the process and the product, along with accountability for the implementation and achievement of stated goals and aspirations. Relevant legislation was also enacted to give effect to the policy.

Seychelles

The office of the prime minister of the Seychelles has dedicated an entire ministry to promotion of the Blue Economy, harnessing its vast resources as a tool to achieve

sustainable development and tackle climate change. The Blue Economy Department within the Ministry of Finance, Trade, and the Blue Economy has oversight over the implementation/realization of the Blue Economy in the Seychelles. Prior to this, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been driving the Blue Economy concept. The dedication of a specific ministry creates room for better coordination and cooperation with other sectors, building synergies and collaborative efforts. The government of Seychelles has also recently developed a “Seychelles’ Blue Economy Roadmap: Defining a Pathway to Prosperity.”

Senegal

A coordination mechanism was created by the president of Senegal in 2006 within the Office of the Prime Minister, with responsibility for addressing maritime security issues and the protection of the marine environment. The coordination mechanism, known as HASSMAR4, is mandated to work with other relevant (maritime) agencies to operationalize national plans and interventions at sea. The geographical scope of operation includes maritime and fluvial waters and ports of Senegal. By locating this coordination mechanism at the highest level of the political machinery, the breakdown of coordination that is seen in many countries in the region is prevented.

South Africa

The Operation Phakisa initiative was launched in June 2014 as a framework to create development and wealth from South Africa’s Blue Economy. It identifies four priority sectors as new growth areas in the ocean economy: transport and manufacturing, offshore oil and gas, aquaculture, protection and governance. The objective of Operation Phakisa is to grow these sectors in order to derive value for the country. In the transport and manufacturing sectors, the aim is to capture benefits related to storage and warehousing, ship-building and repair, rig repair and refurbishment, and boat building, all of which are expected to increase the GDP and the number of jobs. In the offshore oil and gas sector, the aspiration is to create an enabling environment for exploration through mechanisms such as the policy and legislative environment, inclusive economic growth, addressing skills gaps, and overcoming infrastructure challenges. In the aquaculture sector, it is anticipated that there will be jobs generated in fish processing and marketing (participation), which will in turn improve the economic and social status of coastal communities (transformation).

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
November 10, 2013	Mo Ibrahim Foundation Forum: The Chairperson of The African Union Commission Highlights the Importance of African Blue Economy
January 14, 2014	Japanese Prime Minister’s Visit to the African Union: The Chairperson of the Commission Highlights the Importance of Africa’s Vast Oceanic Resources and the Commission’s Determination to Promote the Continent’s Blue Economy
June 2014	Operation Phakisa initiative was launched in S Africa as a framework to create development and wealth from the Blue Economy
March 3, 2015	The four-day meeting in Antananarivo, Madagascar is the 19th Session of Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Eastern Africa and has the theme: Harnessing the Blue Economy for Eastern Africa’s Development.
March 20, 2015	Workshop on Blue Economy in Toliara Madagascar to transfer knowledge and build capacity obtained by Australia
January 19, 2016	The Second Blue Economy Summit in Abu Dhabi to discuss how to develop and apply the Blue Economy approach to support the implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The Second Blue Economy Summit in Abu

Dhabi: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2983BEdeclaration.pdf>

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Blue Economy Summit: the Abu Dhabi sustainability week:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2993BEprogramme.pdf>

Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Western Indian

Ocean: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12734Sustainable Blue Economy.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/12734Sustainable_Blue_Economy.pdf)

African Islands Blue Economy Summit:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55123>

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

As described earlier, the concept of Blue Economy is quite new and relatively unexplored even in developed countries. Notwithstanding the very recent attempts described in the section on “major Countries and Organizations involved”, and given the often-dire economic situation in Africa, there have been no serious past attempts on record at developing Blue Economy in Africa.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The Blue Economy concept is a great way of achieving sustainability, productivity and development in Africa. An agreed-upon agenda with an accompanying plan featuring several measures and steps should be implemented in order to ensure that the concept will be beneficial and effective. This plan requires coordination and prioritization by all African Nations.

Initially, building a Blue Economy culture requires an in-depth level of knowledge and understanding of each country’s resources, through a proper educational system, relating to the country’s Blue sectors and capabilities. When people are educated in respect to their country’s resources and beneficial value, they will be able to apply development measures and Blue Economy specifications that are suitable for their country.

Organizing an agenda featuring policy dialogues along with awareness-raising meetings and campaigns, could have a great impact in supporting Blue Economy. Given the current potential lack of understanding which may be common in most African Nations, especially the Sub-Saharan or land-locked ones, implementing such an agenda will go a long way toward ensuring that the general public will be properly and regularly informed upon the matter.

Moreover, establishing specific institutional roles and functions for proper implementing of the policy, developing a plan of action, as well as setting a periodic progress review, might be very efficient and helpful measures in encouraging Blue Economy development in the African region. Upon the settlement on a well-planned system and the sensitization of people in developing and implementing the Blue Economy policy and strategy, all nations will acquire the ability to benefit from Africa's rich resource endowments.

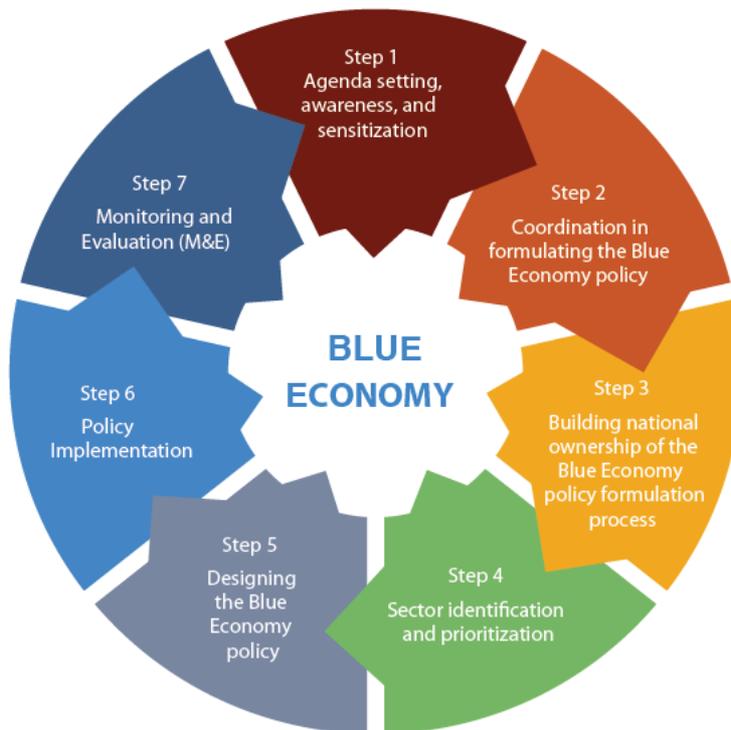
Furthermore, in order to enhance Blue Economy and make it a priority of all African Nations, there needs to be an establishment of interstate cooperation and agreement. Consensus building and international stakeholder engagement upon the matter are considered essential, if a sustainable Blue Economy is to be achieved. These can be implemented through the conservation, preservation, management and sustainable use of natural resources. Social cohesion could play a crucial role in promoting blue economy, as the general public would be united in a focal purpose to grow blue economy in LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries), as well as to improve the stability of its utilization in MEDCs (More Economically Developed Countries).

In addition, all the above goals can only be achieved in an efficient step-wise fashion. Following the establishment of a specific process, its ongoing ownership must be clearly defined. Then, the local and regional infrastructure capabilities should be thoroughly evaluated, so that the enhancement of existing elements or development of new ones can be carried out as needed. This improvement of the infrastructure net should inevitably lead to significant job creation, while simultaneously highlighting the need for enhancing specific skills of the existing workforce. The successful implementation of the above process will eventually lead to equal and balanced sharing of the Blue Economy benefits among all African nations, including the land-locked ones.

Last but not least, achievement of the above goals by relying only on internal African experience and investment is a long shot at best. Therefore, successful attraction of significant and wide-ranging investments from non-african sources is an absolute must. Financially developed regions such as the EU, North America, the league of Arab States and the Far East should be able to provide the essential know-how and required funds in order to not only guarantee the sustainable success of Blue Economy in Africa but also to ensure that it is completed in an accelerated manner. The attraction of the above-described investment partners depends on the ability of the African states to convince the potential

investors that a Blue-Economy-related enterprise will not only provide short-term financial rewards but will also benefit the whole planet, by ensuring that Africa as a whole stays on a strong economic development path. A dynamic, economically developed Africa has far-reaching potential global implications ranging from establishing new market access to significantly reducing migration, terrorism and intracontinental conflicts.

Figure 9: Sequencing and steps of the Blue Economy policy development process



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