



A DROP IN THE OCEAN:

ACP-MEAs 3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO OCEAN GOVERNANCE

June 2022

With generous support from the European Union, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been implementing a multi-million dollar Programme called Enforcing environmental treaties' implementation in African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP-MEAs). The current third phase of the Programme is running from 2020 to 2024.

The ACP-MEAs Programme is a joint partnership between the European Union, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the aim to build the capacities of 79 countries in the ACP regions to effectively implement multilateral environmental agreements in the areas of biodiversity, chemicals and waste and the regional seas.

One of the key objectives of the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme is to enable the ACP countries to sustainably manage oceans and coasts in line with four regional seas conventions in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Programme provides capacity-building to relevant government officials, experts and stakeholders on various issues related to ocean governance¹, such as designation and management of marine protected areas, ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine and coastal resources and tackling marine litter. The Programme also supports the organization of the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to these conventions, allowing countries to get together to identify emerging challenges and identify collective solutions, which in turn helps these countries to be better positioned and to participate more actively in global intergovernmental conferences. By enhancing negotiation capacities and providing a platform for regional cooperation, the ACP-MEAs 3 fosters multilateralism and effective environmental governance.

Moving forward, the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme will catalyse greater exchange of information and lessons-learned across these regional seas conventions secretariats and with other regional seas conventions that fall under the UNEP Regional Seas Programme², including as part of promoting South-South cooperation.

¹ For purposes of this brief, ocean governance is defined as “managing the world's oceans and their resources together so that they are healthy and productive, for the benefit of current and future generations” (European Commission, accessed 27 June 2022). It is a process through which common objectives are set and necessary legal, policy and institutional mechanisms are put into place and enforced to achieve these objectives

² Established in 1974, the Regional Seas Programme coordinates 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans spanning across 146 countries to conserve the marine and coastal environment through region-specific activities.

The Programme will also catalyse greater uptake of science in its activities and support countries effectively contribute to the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to develop an international legal binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, as mandated by the resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly on “End plastic: towards an internationally legal binding instrument”. With the first meeting of the INC taking place in Uruguay in December 2022, the ACP-MEAS 3 will produce a range of knowledge products to inform the regional negotiators.

This brief provides an overview of the work currently being undertaken by the Regional Seas Conventions, covered under the ACP MEAs 3 Programme, and aims to consolidate and link the work under the Programme and those of the Conventions.



Women at beach in Zanzibar, Tanzania (Credit: Majkl Velner)

Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern African Region (Abidjan Convention)

The ACP-MEAs 3 Programme has contributed technically to the organization of the 13th Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention, held virtually from 13 to 15 December 2021. The Conference adopted 15 decisions out of 21 that are directly related to the Programme, and a side event was organized to present the process of developing an additional protocol on Marine Protected Areas to fight against biodiversity loss. A separate workshop to draft the main chapters of the future protocol was organized in February 2022 in Saly, Senegal, and a working group was set up to facilitate this process.

The Programme also initiated discussions with countries for the adoption of additional protocols signed in July 2019 on:

- Pollution from land-based sources and activities (Bassam Protocol);
- Integrated coastal zone management (Pointe-Noire Protocol);
- Management of mangrove ecosystems (Calabar Protocol);

- Norms and standards for offshore oil and gas activities (Malabo Protocol).

The Abidjan Convention Secretariat held meetings with the ministers of Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal and with the Prime Minister of Mauritania to accelerate this process; and as a result, several countries have already started the ratification process, while others are in the process of drafting the explanatory memorandum.

At the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in a hybrid format online and in Nairobi in March 2022, the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme campaigned for the adoption of a global legally binding instrument to address plastic pollution. The Programme will continue to support the parties to the Convention to ensure that the specificities of the region are reflected in the future treaty on plastic pollution.

In addition, the Programme conducted a series of webinars to develop a regional framework for combating plastic pollution. This framework will be followed by national action plans so that all countries can develop their own strategies to combat plastic pollution. A booklet is being developed for this purpose.

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention)

The ACP-MEAs 3 Programme has provided training on environmental negotiation and diplomacy for the national focal points to participate effectively in the meetings of the Convention governing bodies. Through various workshops, non-contracting Parties were also encouraged to ratify the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols and to discuss ways to address key barriers in the national process. Nicaragua recently became the 18th Contracting Party to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW) and St. Kitts and Nevis is making efforts to ratify the SPAW Protocol and the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities. The Dominican Republic has listed a new marine protected area and is receiving support for the implementation of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention). Suriname and Guyana will also benefit from ecosystem-based management activities.

As part of its Programme of work, the Secretariat has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commission for the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission) with focus on south-south cooperation. Through collaboration with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute and the Global Water Partnership-Caribbean, the Parties will benefit from a small grants Programme and community-based interventions to improve wastewater and marine litter management. The Secretariat is also working closely with its Regional Activity Centres in the development national pollution and nutrient reduction strategies.

The potential of a sustainable blue economy to drive economic growth in the region has been recognized by the Contracting Parties to the Cartagena Convention, with calls for the Secretariat to do further work on the subject. The Secretariat will develop a study on blue

economy under ACP-MEAs 3 Programme, focusing on financing and links to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The Cartagena Convention celebrates the 35th anniversary of its entry into force and a commemorative video was launched virtually on 21 June 2022.

Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention)

The ACP-MEAs 3 Programme supported the convening of the 10th Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention (COP10) where the Contracting Parties adopted 13 decisions to protect and manage the Western Indian Ocean. At least five of these decisions were relevant to the current activities of the ACP-MEAs 3.

The Programme has also supported the review and amendment of the 1985 Protocol concerning protected areas, wild flora and fauna in the Eastern African region and its four annexes. The amendment is intended to strengthen ecosystem approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and to reinforce the legal and policy basis for the protection of marine and coastal biodiversity in the region. In 2021, an assessment was made of the status and conservation measures for (migratory) sharks and ray species in the region, which is being compiled into a report by the World Conservation Society to, among others, inform the updating of the annexes.

At the national level, the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme has helped Comoros more effectively manage coral reef areas crucial to coastal livelihoods by enhancing the capacity of Marine Protected Areas managers in area-based ecosystem management, operational monitoring, control and surveillance measures. The Programme also supports Comoros in mitigating influx of waste into the marine environment through the implementation of the national marine litter action plan. In Tanzania, the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme partners with the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter to catalyse marine litter actions in the country, including development of the national action plan for marine litter and plastic pollution. The Programme will also support Seychelles the development of a similar action plan.

Convention for the Protection of Nature Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (Noumea Convention)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) administers and Noumea Convention and, as per practice, SPREP's ACP-MEAs 3 Programme team coordinated the organisation of the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention in September 2021 to ensure alignment between the work of the Convention and the Programme's activities. Under the auspices of the ACP-MEAs 3 Programme, SPREP also supported the development of the Regional Guidelines for Protected Area Management Effectiveness and the Regional Marine Species Action Plan, which outlines specific management plans for each of the migratory species listed in the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). In November 2021, a side event was organized in margins of the Third Clean

Pacific Roundtable, exploring the important role of women and communities in reducing and managing waste and pollution. In addition, through the Programme, SPREP has been able to strengthen its technical capacity for environmental spatial data management and the use of spatial data in planning, monitoring, reporting and decision-making on environmental issues.

In one of the Pacific Island member countries, the development of liquid waste standards is underway as well as environmental standards for end-of-pipe and receiving environment, most often the seas and ocean. A regional framework to address marine litter and microplastics will also be developed in line with the prospective outcomes of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on plastic pollution.



Women in waste management industry with SPREP staff at the ACP-MEAIII Side Event at the Third Clean Pacific Roundtable, 17 November 2021 (Credit: SPREP)

AT A GLANCE

Abidjan Convention

- Entered into force on 5 August 1984.
- 14 Parties: Benin, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo

Cartagena Convention

- Entered into force on 11 October 1986.
- 26 Parties: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, USA, Venezuela
- Supported by the following protocols:
 1. Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Oil Spills in the Wider Caribbean Region
 2. Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Wider Caribbean Region
 3. Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities

Nairobi Convention

- Entered into force on 30 May 1996, amended on 31 March 2010.
- 10 Parties: Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania
- Supported by the Protocol for the Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-based Sources and Activities.

Noumea Convention

- Entered into force in on 22 August 1990.
- 12 Parties: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, USA
- Supported by the following protocols:
 1. Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the South Pacific Region by Dumping, which was amended in 2006 but the amendment has not yet entered into force.
 2. Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution Emergencies in the South Pacific Region
- The following protocols, once entered into force, will supersede the above 2. Emergencies Protocol. These protocols were adopted at the Conference of the Plenipotentiaries in 2006.
 1. Protocol on oil pollution preparedness, response and cooperation in the pacific region.
 2. Protocol on hazardous and noxious substances pollution, Preparedness, response and cooperation in the pacific region.

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