



ABIDJAN DECLARATION

11th ORDINARY SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS April 24, 2025

The Ministers and Delegates of the Member States of the Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean -ATLAFCO- (Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and Togo), meeting in Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on April 24, 2025 on the occasion of the holding of the 11th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of the Member States:

Recalling the principles and objectives of the Ministerial Convention on Fisheries Cooperation among African States Bordering the Atlantic Ocean for the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture in the Region;

Recalling that ATLAFCO supports the principle of *sustainable use of living marine resources*, based on the best available scientific evidence;

Taking into account the spirit of cooperation and partnership which drives the Member States to work together towards the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030-particularly SDG14" *Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for development*;

Encouraging the consolidation of a concerted African position around the main components of the international treaty for the protection of the high seas and marine biodiversity or *BBNJ agreement* such as the creation of Marine Protected Areas, studies of the impact of human activities on the marine environment, as well as access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of their benefits;

Noting the willingness of Member States to implement policies to protect the marine ecosystem and develop a Regional Blue Economy that considers the factors of climate change;

Welcoming the launch by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist him, of the Atlantic Initiative, which constitutes a historic and strategic turning point for the entire African continent, and which aims to make the Atlantic coast a high place of human communion, a pole of economic integration and a center of continental and international influence;



And on the proposal of ATLAFCO experts meeting on April 23, 2025, in Abidjan.

DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. Renew their commitment to combating all forms of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to strengthening coordination and information exchange mechanisms between the relevant authorities of the Member States and their economic partners.**
- 2. Integrate the principle of sustainable use of living marine resources into national Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance policies and strategies and advocate for it within international and regional Fisheries Management Organizations.**
- 3. Encourage all Member States to adhere to relevant international legal instruments, including the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) and the International Treaty for the Protection of the High Seas and Marine Biological Diversity (BBNJ).**
- 4. Placing innovation at the heart of the development of a continental Blue Economy while strengthening the important role played by the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in food security and nutrition.**
- 5. Encourage the expansion of stock assessment campaigns in maritime waters falling within the Exclusive Economic Zones of Member States launched by ATLAFCO in 2024.**
- 6. Strengthen the gender approach and the role of women in social dynamics within fishing communities.**
- 7. Continue to harmonize the positions of member states within international and regional fisheries management organizations and act in solidarity.**
- 8. Consolidate Africa's voice within the highest international bodies for the governance of seas and oceans.**