



**United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa**

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Sustainable Blue Economy Conference:

**Opportunities and challenges for a sustainable development of the Blue
Economy in Africa**

Opening remarks

by

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Executive Secretary

26 November 2018, Nairobi

Excellencies,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be attending the first ever Blue Economy Conference in Africa here in Kenya.

I would first of all like to congratulate President Uhuru Kenyatta and the people of Kenya on the successful organization of this Conference.

I would also like to congratulate the Kenyan government on the ongoing reforms in the Blue Economy. In particular, **the launch of the new Kenya Coast Guard Service and the commissioning of the MV Doria on Monday last week. This will reinforce security in the region, assist in marine pollution prevention, as well as, prevent Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. It is estimated that Kenya loses 118 million USD every year to IUU fishing in its' waters.**

The Blue Economy is interlinked with the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063 in numerous ways. The Blue Economy calls for a multi-sectoral and integrated approach and supports the creation of value chains which can substantially contribute to the structural transformation of economies, job creation, fight against poverty, improvement of social conditions, among others.

Diversification of economies through the blue economy and building an inclusive process is crucial to developing the Blue economy and achieving the SDGs.

The wealth that can be generated from the ocean is conservatively valued at US\$ 4 trillion, which is equivalent to the GDP of countries in East Asia and the Pacific in 2017, and of which it is estimated goods and services provide \$2.5 trillion annually. It is clear that the Blue economy has significant potential to bolster socio-economic transformation of the world's global economy.

The multiplier effects of the blue economy components are remarkable. Every dollar generated by a direct marine industry leads to an additional 82 cents generated by associated industries. The industry of offshore energy has the largest multiplier effects. In the fisheries sector, whilst most fishing jobs are almost entirely taken by men, 59 percent of the processing work is done by women. Also for each person employed in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, three jobs are produced in secondary activities (processing plants, distributors, exporters, boat builders etc).

In Africa, the AfCFTA also represents a critical opportunity towards diversification of economies. The ECA estimates that the AfCFTA will increase intra-African trade by over 50 percent and presents the opportunity for trade in industrialised goods, which by extension fosters economic stability. This is in contrast to trade with other regions which is dominated by exports of commodities and primary products and imports of industrialised and processed goods. The price fluctuations of commodities on international markets is associated with cyclical shocks to African economies. Also, the AfCFTA will contribute to the deepening of regional value chains and connect national economies to a continental market of over 1 billion people, thus creating opportunities for investment and work, especially for the continent's youth. **In this regard, the AfCFTA is central to the movement of goods and persons,**

and to the reduction of costs of trade between African countries, which in return will foster the development of the Blue Economy in the region.

The ECA has been assisting Member States in developing different components of the Blue Economy. The ECA has produced the “*Africa’s Blue Economy: A policy handbook*”. This tool which can assist Member States to develop their national strategies in the Blue Economy, will be presented here at the Conference on Wednesday, November 28 in the panel on “People, culture and communities: the inclusive blue economy”. In this respect, the ECA is ready to help Member States in developing their national strategies in the blue economy. We will also work together with the African Union to set up a Regional Blue Economy Framework.

I thank you.