



## BLUE FUTURE CONFERENCE

THE BLUE ECONOMY AND CLIMATE ACTION IN AFRICA:  
ISLAND STATES AND COASTAL AT THE FOREFRONT

### Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa

Moroni, Union of Comoros | 14th June 2023

Recognizing the critical importance of ocean conservation, climate action, and the sustainable development of coastal communities,

We, the Ministers, and High-Level Representatives of the Union of Comoros, the Republic of Cabo Verde, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Madagascar, the Republic of Mauritius, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Sao Tome e Principe, the Republic of Seychelles, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Republic of South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania assembled at the “**Blue Future Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy and Climate Action in Africa: Island and Coastal States at the forefront**” in Moroni, Union of Comoros from 12th to 14th June 2023, hereby declare our collective recognition of African Island States specificities and the need for their integration in continental and regional policies, strategies and frameworks and our support for the Great Blue Wall initiative as a flagship, transformative, and collective approach to foster resilience and to climate change mitigation and adaptation and as a leverage for a sustainable Blue Economy in Africa.

We therefore commit to working together to advocate for a specific treatment of African Islands and coastal issues and to achieving the goals and objectives of the Great Blue Wall initiative towards meeting the continental and global aspirations outlined in the African Union Agenda 2063 and UN Agenda 2030.

#### Regarding the African Island States specificities:

- a) We acknowledge that the island and coastal nations of the African continent are on the extreme frontlines of the impact of interconnected crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and coastal zones degradation including impacts on the ocean and socio-economic vulnerability, which require an ongoing and enhanced systematic and strong political advocacy as well as urgent and coordinated action.
- b) In that context, we recognise that African Island Countries are particularly vulnerable and already heavily impacted by these interconnected challenges and therefore require a specific attention and targeted response to support their effort to address current and future challenges and opportunities.
- c) We affirm the needa to safeguard the sensitive and interconnected marine and coastal ecosystems and ecological processes of the continent, including coastal forests, mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs, which provide essential ecosystem services and goods and contribute to climate resilience and to the economic growth and livelihood of African Island and Coastal States.
- d) We acknowledge the unique characteristics of African Island States and the imperative to leverage the tremendous advantages of blue economy development for sustainable production, value addition, investments, and trade towards intra – African and global markets.
- e) We acknowledge the need to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems in African Island States, based on solid observation networks, which have critical potential to save lives.
- f) We also recognise the unique opportunity presented by of the African Continental Free



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Trade Area (AfCFTA) to strengthen sustainable and integrated regional blue economy value chains and commit to work collaboratively to achieve this objective.

- g) We emphasise the need for inclusive and sustainable blue economy development processes that foster MSME development, innovation, and entrepreneurship and that seek to create economic development opportunities for Africa's women, youth and other vulnerable groups.
- h) We call for a coordinated dialogue among African Island States and Coastal Nations regarding the implementation of the AfCFTA and the opportunities offered through the development of sustainable Blue Economies and the promotion of circular economy approaches as leverages for economic integration of African Island States in the continent.
- i) We commit to deepening trade relationships between Island States and other States throughout the AfCFTA.
- j) We call for the strengthening, the consolidation and expansion of the regional maritime security architecture for the Western Indian Ocean as a prerequisite and key mechanism for the development of Blue Economy and the implementation of the AfCFTA as well as for the prevention, reduction and coordinated response to risks, offences, and crimes at sea, particularly with regard to marine and coastal ecosystems.
- k) We take note of the proposition to consider the opportunity to organise an annual forum of African Coast Guards in collaboration with Regional Economic Communities and Intergovernmental Organisations to initiate a strengthened movement for Maritime Security and Safety in Africa.
- l) We reaffirm the importance of strengthening the institutional architecture to support the interests of African islands, in particular the African Islands Climate Commission, one of the three climate commissions recognised by the African Union.

### **Supporting the Great Blue Wall Initiative for a sustainable and regenerative blue economy:**

- a) We acknowledge the Great Blue Wall as a flagship African initiative and commend the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for its operationalisation.
- b) We endorse the need and opportunity to establish of a connected network of regenerative and inclusive coastal seascapes on the continent, as a concrete African ocean action pathway to concomitantly and collaboratively respond to the biodiversity and climate crises while also unlocking the socio-economic potential inherent in the development of a regenerative blue economy toward effective resilience.
- c) We recognize the potential of the Great Blue Wall concept to unlock the development of a regenerative and sustainable blue economy that directly benefits Africa's island and coastal communities.
- d) We commend this transformative initiative and advocate for exploring opportunities and partnerships for its upscale at the continental level and presenting it as a concrete and transformative initiative led and implemented by Africa for Africa in collaboration with global partners and other island and coastal states within the framework of the second ten-year implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. This inclusive approach ensures that the benefits of the initiative extend beyond Africa, contributing to the collective global efforts towards a sustainable future.
- e) We encourage the Green Climate Fund to set up a programme in partnership with IUCN to



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support the Great Blue Wall initiative.

- f) We commit to fostering a conducive enabling environment, including necessary policies and effective implementation mechanisms to accelerate a climate-nature-people inclusive and ocean-oriented economic growth for Island and Coastal States, which has the potential to generate at least two million blue jobs and benefit a minimum of 70 million people in island and coastal communities in the Western Indian Ocean region by 2030.
- g) We encourage all regional and international stakeholders to align with already existing regional frameworks, institutions, networks, programmes, and projects in the Western Indian Ocean to build synergies and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Great Blue Wall initiative.
- h) We advocate for increased public and private investment in; and financing for, sustainable coastal and marine value chains, promoting, among others, responsible and sustainable fisheries, green infrastructures, ecotourism, renewable energies, and blue innovation.
- i) We also recognise the unique opportunity presented by the implementation of the AfCFTA for the development of integrated regional blue value chains and we commit to work collaboratively to develop these, through coordinated partnerships that contribute to this critical agenda for the continent.
- j) We support current continental and regional institutions, frameworks, and initiatives and call for synergies that promote ocean science and facilitate investment in Research & Development, science and technology, education, and training, with the necessity to strengthen regional climate-ocean science institutional expertise and the opportunity to establish dedicated institutes of excellence that bring together public, private, and non-state actors.

### **Championing a new partnership in blue economy through enhanced cooperation, partnerships and collaborations:**

- a) We emphasize the importance of international cooperation among all relevant stakeholders and partners, as well as knowledge sharing, and strengthening of capacities and technologies to support the accelerated and impactful implementation of the Great Blue Wall initiative in accordance with international law.
- b) We recognise the mandate and important role of the AU (including AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AfCFTA Secretariat, and RECs, amongst others), in Africa's blue economy governance, implementation, coordination and tracking of priority flagship initiatives such as the GBWI and support increased visibility of the initiative in AU decision processes.
- c) We commit to establish conducive co-investment, knowledge sharing and B2B platforms to facilitate a sustainable financing and resource mobilisation mechanism for the successful implementation of the Great Blue Wall initiative as well as for the promotion of blue and circular economy in Africa.
- d) We call upon international organizations, financial institutions, and the private sector to work with committed governments and partners to contribute to unlocking the necessary technical and financial support for the successful implementation of the initiative.
- e) We recognize the importance meaningfully engage Youth and Women in national and regional initiatives on blue economy and climate resilience taking into account their direct role in the transformation of our societies toward a sustainable future.
- f) We commit to regular progress assessments, reporting, and review mechanisms to ensure



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transparency and accountability in achieving the goals of the Great Blue Wall, through its Secretariat.

- g) We recognize the role of regional organisations and bodies in bringing together African Island and Coastal States for collective actions such as the Indian Ocean Commission which implements projects related to maritime security and safety as a prerequisite for the development of Blue Economy, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and coastal resilience to preserve and restore ecosystem services while maintaining and improving the integrity of marine ecosystems for livelihoods, as well as the promotion of circular economy for wealth creation to Island and Coastal communities.
- h) We recommend that all innovative financing instruments and mechanisms be analysed to ensure that the multiplicity of vulnerabilities is taken into account in the process of overhauling the international financial architecture and, in so doing, to consider the mechanism best suited to the specific characteristics and vulnerabilities of the island and coastal states of Africa in the forthcoming global agendas, including the including the Summit on the New Global Financing Pact in Paris on 23rd June 2023.
- i) We call for strengthened advocacy for a sustainable blue economy, meaningful climate action, and the implementation of the Great Blue Wall Initiative in all international forums including the Africa Climate Summit 2023, the UNFCCC COP28 and beyond.

### **Welcoming the organisation of the first “Blue Future Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy and Climate Action in Africa: Island and Coastal States at the forefront”:**

- a) We commend H.E.M. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros and current Chairperson of the African Union, and the Government of the Union of Comoros for the organisation of this Ministerial Conference and for their warm welcome and the hospitality paid to the delegations.
- b) We support the advocacy of H.E. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros and current Chairperson of the African Union, emphasizing the specific vulnerabilities and needs of African Island States whilst calling for investments in Blue Economy to affirm the emergence of African Ocean-States.
- c) We commend the African Union for recognising the aspirations of its member states to develop Africa’s Blue Economy towards achievement of Agenda 2063 and support the AU commitment to effective institutional reforms to drive blue economy development for Africa, by Africa through strengthened support to its member states and regional bodies.
- d) We thank the African Union Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the UN Development Programme, and the Indian Ocean Commission for their contributions, supports and inputs to this ministerial conference.
- e) We commend the gathering and participation to this conference of delegations from all Western Indian Ocean Island and Coastal States of African as well as representatives from African Island States of the Atlantic.
- f) We express our appreciation to our development partners for their continued engagement on the blue economy, climate action in Africa’s Island and coastal States and the operationalisation of a sustainable AfCFTA.



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### **In adopting this Declaration:**

- a) We affirm our commitment to initiate a process, to be known as the “Moroni Process for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa and African Island States specificities”, systematically raising the agenda of African Island and Coastal States
- b) We reaffirm our will to promote blue economy at continental and regional levels and to accelerate the Great Blue Wall initiative to drive nature-based blue recovery efforts, enhance socio-ecological resilience, and foster a regenerative blue economy on the African continent and in support of African Island and Coastal States.

**Adopted by acclamation in Palais du Peuple, Moroni, Union of Comoros, under the patronage of H.E.M. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union**