



República da
Guiné Bissau



Partenariat Régional pour la Conservation
de la zone côtière et Marine
en Afrique de l'Ouest

Press kit

Regional coastal and marine forum, Bissau from 23 to 26 April
2024

**"Conservation, Resilience and Sustainable Development of the West African
Coastal Zone in the Face of Global Change".**

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I. CONTEXT AND ISSUES

The Regional Marine and Coastal Forum is an initiative of the Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in West Africa (PRCM). The Regional Forum is at the heart of PRCM's collaborative and partnership-based approach, which aims to work **"Together, for a healthy and productive West African coastline"**.

The Regional Forum is an exceptional opportunity for high-level actors working in the field of conservation to share their experiences. It is a credible platform capable of bringing together stakeholders in the West African marine and coastal zone and federating their actions around the challenges of conservation and sustainable development of this coastline. It brings together national and intergovernmental institutions, scientific institutions, national and international NGOs, socio-professional organisations, the private sector (fishing, tourism, hydrocarbons) and technical and financial partners.

The Regional Coastal and Marine Forum was launched in Conakry in 2004. Since then, ten editions have been organised by the PRCM. The eleventh edition of the Regional Forum will be held in Bissau, Guinea-Bissau, from 23 to 26 April 2024. The official opening ceremony will be presided over by the President of the Republic, **His Excellency Umaro Embalo Sissoko**. The meeting will bring together leading figures in marine conservation under the theme **"Conservation, resilience and sustainable development in the face of global change"**.

○ Why a regional coastal and marine forum?

This is a unique opportunity for the coalition of PRCM members, organisations and partners involved in marine and coastal conservation to share their project experiences. It is also an opportunity to strengthen their links with other partners and gain access to a high-level network of donors and decision-makers.

○ Why a theme on resilience and sustainable development in West African coastal countries?

In West Africa, marine and coastal resources are the bedrock of the countries' economic and social development. Indeed, coastal zone resources generate almost **56% of the region's GDP**. The annual volume of legal fishing in West African waters exceeds 1.6 million tons, in addition to the significant revenue generated by the operation of ports, agro-industries, the tourism industry and offshore oil platforms.

The West African coastline is also the site where synergies between the coastline and communities unfold, in a centuries-old dynamic of securing livelihoods through the use of marine and coastal resources and building resilience to meet the various environmental challenges. Its conservation is therefore an issue of security and peace for the local and national communities that live there and are closely dependent on the good health of the coastal environment. Most human activities are now affected by global change, prompting these same communities to constantly adapt and build their resilience in the face of

climate disruption. Examples include coastal erosion and flooding, two scourges whose consequences are exacerbated by unplanned urbanisation.

- **What is special about the 11th edition of the Regional Forum?**

The 11th edition is being organised in a context marked by the signature of an international treaty on the protection of biodiversity in the high seas on 19 June 2023, and the choice of a PRCM member country, Senegal, to host the 6th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC 6) in 2027, for the first time in Africa.

II. THEME AND FOCUS OF DISCUSSION

1. The theme and sub-themes of the 11th edition

The 11th edition of the Forum will address the central theme of "**Conservation, resilience and sustainable development of the West African coastline in the face of global change**". Conservation experts will deliver powerful presentations during the plenary sessions and roundtables, exploring various sub-themes including:

1. Science, local knowledge and policy for a sustainable coastal zone;
2. Coastal resilience solutions: adapt, mitigate and thrive;
3. Blue economy and marine conservation
4. Youth, education and engagement for a healthy coastal environment;
5. Coastal zone, peace and security: protecting and restoring for sustainability
6. Mobilising West African stakeholders to meet the challenges of IMPAC6.

These key issues will be at the heart of the debates, providing a platform for exchange and cooperation to develop innovative and sustainable solutions for the West African coastal region.

2. Leaders' Conference - Introducing some of the speakers

- ✓ **His Excellency Viriato Luís Soares Cassamá** - Minister of the Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Action of Guinea Bissau

His Excellency **Viriato Luís Soares Cassamá** is a key player in the fields of conservation and adaptation to climate change. He is renowned for his commitment and work on environmental projects and events, such as LEG stocktaking, and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA).

Mr Cassamá played an important role in mapping climate-related financial flows to the ECOWAS-CILSS zone, in collaboration with Expertise France.

Cassamá is also active in promoting the use of knowledge and products for ecosystem-based adaptation. He was one of the speakers at the EbA 2021 Knowledge Day, where he shared his experience and knowledge on the importance of EbA in building resilience to climate change.

- ✓ **Ousmane Fall SARR**, Director of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at the Agence Sénégalaise d'Electrification Rurale (Agency for Rural Electrification-ASER).

Mr Ousmane Fall SARR holds a degree in geological engineering with a specialisation in the environment. Since 2005, he has regularly participated as a Senegalese delegate in international climate change negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

He has developed a number of national climate change policies and programmes as Chairman of Senegal's National Climate Change Committee on behalf of Senegal's Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development,

Mr SARR has worked in the energy sector in Senegal for 22 years and has been involved in the design and current implementation of Senegal's innovative universal access rural electrification programme, based on a public-private partnership while integrating carbon markets, climate finance and a range of innovative financing instruments for resource mobilisation.

In 2016, with the support of some West African delegates, he initiated the creation of the West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance at Cop 22 in Marrakech.

- ✓ **Dr. García-Moreno**, Chairman of the BirdLife East Atlantic Flyway Initiative/BirdLife International Netherlands

García-Moreno is a biologist with a passion for nature conservation. He has conducted research at several research institutes in the United States (UCLA, University of Michigan) and Europe (University of Copenhagen, Max Planck Institute for Ornithology, University of Konstanz).

He has held senior positions in a number of international conservation organisations, including Conservation International, Wetlands International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

For the past eight years, he has coordinated the Vogelbescherming Netherlands / BirdLife International Programme in the Netherlands (VBN), playing a leading role in promoting and coordinating the conservation actions of BirdLife partners along the East Atlantic Flyway.

- ✓ **Sandra Kloff** , Biologist/ Pays Pas

Sandra Kloff is a Dutch biologist who began her work in the region in 1995, focusing on the biological control of invasive aquatic plants in the Djoudj National Park and Lac de Guiers in Senegal. She later worked as a technical advisor for the IUCN Wetlands Restoration and Conservation Programme in Mauritania, where she facilitated more inclusive management between resource users and the authorities.

In addition to her field work, Sandra chaired a working group of the IUCN CEEP Commission and was an advisor to the Oil and Gas Biodiversity Programme, providing technical advice to the Mauritanian Prime Minister and other institutions and stakeholders on the environmental management of the offshore oil and gas sector.

Sandra currently works as an external expert for the Dutch Impact Assessment Commission, providing her expertise on biodiversity integration into the green hydrogen, mining and oil and gas sectors.

3. Expected results

The results expected at the end of this edition are :

- Improved cooperation to conserve the coastline and its resources;
- Priority actions are identified for the development of regional initiatives to improve the sustainable management of the coastal and marine zone;
- Successful strategies and best practices for sustainable marine management and coastal resilience are shared and widely disseminated to stakeholders;
- Strategic partnerships between stakeholders in the marine and coastal stakeholders are strengthened to implement the International Treaty for the Protection of Biodiversity in the High Seas;
- Stakeholders in the West African coastal and marine zone, particularly young people, are involved in coastal conservation processes and initiatives;
- A consensus statement by Forum stakeholders on the priorities for sustainable management of the coastal and marine zone is developed.

4. Our partners

The Regional Marine and Coastal Forum benefits from the support of the most prestigious partners committed to the PRCM cause. These include :

- The World Bank through the WACA programme
- The CÉGEP de la Gaspésie et des Îles
- The French Global Environment Facility (FGEF)
- The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)
- The IUCN Pabio programme

Working together with these committed partners, the PRCM Forum can foster innovation, promote best practices and mobilise the resources needed for the sustainable conservation of coastal ecosystems.

III. PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES

5. The Forum in figures

The 11th edition means:

- **400** participants expected;
- **150** national and international organisations;

- 50 national and international media;
- 32 countries represented;
- 32 side events;
- 11 technical workshops;
- 4 plenary sessions

6. Description of activities: conferences, workshops, round tables, side events

▪ Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony is both short and dynamic. In addition to the official opening speech by the Head of State of Guinea-Bissau, the floor will be given to partners, donors and representatives of international organisations to open a direct dialogue with participants.

▪ Leaders' conferences

These are sessions during which keynotes will review emerging and current issues relating to the sustainable management of the oceans. Keynote speakers include leading conservationists, renowned specialists and young leaders in a range of fields related to the forum's theme: "**Conservation, resilience and sustainable development of the West African coastal zone in the face of global change**".

▪ Side events

These are a series of activities organised in the form of technical workshops or learning sessions, etc.

➤ *Technical workshops*

Sessions during which those involved in conservation present a technical or scientific paper or share the results of an action or research, etc.

➤ *Learning sessions*

These sessions provide training in a technique, a proven practice, or a tool. related to the conservation and management of marine and coastal zones.

▪ Conservation cinema

These are screenings of films about conservation.

▪ Excursions

Visits to sites of ecological importance: Bijagos Islands, mangrove areas (Cacheu in the north of Bissau and the Mansoa region in the south).

7. The Programme

Click on the link below to see the programme

- <https://forum.prcmarine.org/le-programme/> (French)
- <https://forum.prcmarine.org/en/le-programme-en/> (English)

IV. Highlights and achievements

8. A retrospective of previous editions of the Forum

- The 7th edition in Dakar, Senegal, from 26 to 29 November 2013 on the theme *"Investing in marine and coastal conservation for the well-being of local communities"*;
- The 8th edition in Praia, Cabo Verde, from 2 to 5 November 2015 on the theme of *"Coastal stakeholders: let's take action on climate change"*;
- The 9th edition in Conakry, Guinea, from 23 to 27 October 2017 on the theme *"Investing in coastal resilience for a prosperous future in West Africa"*.
- The 10th edition in Saly, Senegal, from 29 March to 1 April 2022 on the theme *"The health of the oceans, a challenge for the sustainable development of West African coastal countries"*.

9. Testimonials from some of the participants

"At the 2022 PRCM Forum in Senegal, the presentations and side events were well chosen and well applied to the conservation of coastal wetlands. It was an excellent opportunity to meet new people, to be exposed to new ideas, to find out what other environmental conservation professionals are doing in their daily work, and to learn about the difficulties encountered by professionals from other structures and environmental defenders. It's a great opportunity to exchange knowledge and build a network of contacts". **Ms Khady Gueye Fall**, Wetlands International

"For me, the PRCM Forum is an important event in the marine and coastal agenda for stakeholders in West Africa. It's a kind of one-stop shop where you can meet several partners in the same place, while optimising time management", **Abdoulaye Diagana**, Abidjan Convention.

10. Presentation of the PRCM

The Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in West Africa (PRCM) is a platform that currently brings together 88 partners involved in preserving the sea and coastline. These include civil society organisations, government institutions and sub-regional commissions, elected representatives, professional organisations, researchers and teachers, and international NGOs. The Partnership covers seven countries: **Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.** **Ahmed Senhoury** is the Executive Director.

The PRCM is headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, with offices in Bissau (Guinea-Bissau) and Nouakchott (Mauritania).

Vision

PRCM's vision is to work towards a healthy and productive marine environment for the well-being of populations in West Africa.

Missions

The PRCM operates through a broad, long-term platform. Its mission is to :

- Mobilise and strengthen the capacities and skills of the various stakeholders;
- Support, through its network of partners, the coherence and coordination of the various interventions active at regional, national and local levels.
- Play an important political advocacy role;
- Promote working in coalition and strengthening partnerships between institutions.
- Support the coherence and harmonisation of policies and agreements;
- Mobilise resources in a sustainable manner;
- Act as a mediator and contribute to the mobilisation of capacities and dialogue between the various stakeholders;
- Mobilise and capitalise on the results of research, local knowledge and experience, and good practice of Partnership members, as well as other organisations within and outside the region.

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