



PRCM
REGIONAL MARINE
AND COASTAL FORUM
12th edition



Ministry of
Environment
and Sustainable
Development

Nouakchott Declaration

On political commitments to accelerate the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal 30x30 target in West Africa

We, the participants, comprising Ministers, technical and financial partners, and regional institutions, gathered in Nouakchott on 27 April 2026 on the occasion of the High-Level Roundtable on the theme “Political Commitments to Accelerate the Implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal 30x30 Target in West Africa”, organized on the margins of the 12th edition of the Regional Marine and Coastal Forum (FOMACO) of the PRCM, held in Nouakchott from 27 to 31 April 2026;

Considering that this High-Level Roundtable constitutes a strategic space for political dialogue aimed at fostering concrete, progressive and measurable commitments by West African States in favor of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans;

Recalling the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as well as the adoption of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement);

Reaffirming the objectives and principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources;

Recognizing that West Africa plays a strategic role in regional and global ocean governance, particularly with regard to the conservation of marine biodiversity, climate resilience, food security, employment and the well-being of populations;

Aware of the urgent need to act in response to increasing anthropogenic and climate-related pressures affecting West Africa’s marine and coastal ecosystems, including overfishing, unsustainable practices, pollution, habitat degradation, intensified use of coastal areas and the impacts of climate change;

Reaffirming our commitment to transparent processes guided by the public interest, institutional integrity, impartiality, the precautionary principle, equity, participation and the best available scientific knowledge, including local and traditional knowledge;

Aware that the ownership, integration and implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and the 30x30 target in national and regional strategies require sustained political leadership, strengthened cooperation and appropriate resources;

Emphasizing the essential role of States, regional organizations, parliaments, civil society, the scientific community, local communities, women, youth and development partners in the effective implementation of international commitments relating to marine and coastal biodiversity;

Reaffirm our common resolve to work toward the sustainable, inclusive, science-based and equitable management of the oceans, and agree on the following political commitments:

1. BBNJ Agreement

- We intend to pursue, in accordance with our national procedures and respective mandates, the appropriate steps to promote ownership and the progressive implementation of the BBNJ Agreement.
- We encourage the continuation of national procedures relating to the ratification of the BBNJ Agreement, in accordance with the contexts and timelines specific to each State.
- We encourage, as needed and where relevant, the conduct or updating of legal, institutional and technical gap analyses related to the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, including environmental impact assessments, area-based management tools, capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology.
- We encourage, in accordance with national frameworks, the strengthening of focal points and coordination mechanisms useful for monitoring the BBNJ Agreement and linking it with the relevant regional frameworks.

2. 30x30 Target

- We support, within the framework of a concerted vision based on the best available knowledge, efforts to strengthen the establishment, expansion, effective management and ecological connectivity of marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), in accordance with Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- We encourage, according to national contexts, the progressive updating and alignment of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), as well as relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks, in order to better take into account, the provisions of the BBNJ Agreement and national contributions to the 30x30 target.
- We emphasize the importance of ensuring that the establishment, expansion and management of MPAs and OECMs take into account the rights, livelihoods, access to resources and food security of coastal communities, particularly small-scale fisheries actors, and promote, as far as possible, the fair and equitable sharing of benefits linked to the sustainable use of marine resources.

3. Strategic Dialogue on Sustainable Ocean Management

- We support the progressive strengthening of a regional framework for political dialogue on the oceans, bringing together governments, regional organizations, parliaments, civil society, the scientific community and international partners, in order to promote ocean governance based on precaution, science, equity, transparency and participation.
- We support the ratification by States of the additional protocols to the Abidjan Convention as a regional legal framework for policy harmonization on sustainable management, particularly in response to the three planetary crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution from both land-based and marine sources.

4. Regional and International Cooperation

- We encourage the strengthening of regional and international cooperation in support of the coordinated implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and the 30x30 target, particularly within the competent regional and sub-regional organizations.

- We encourage, in line with regional priorities, the definition of common priorities, the sharing of scientific data and information, capacity-building, as well as cooperation in monitoring, control and enforcement of measures for the conservation and sustainable management of the oceans and their resources.
- We encourage the Abidjan Convention to accelerate the development and adoption of the additional protocol on MPAs, so as to make it a governance and policy-harmonization tool for national and regional policies on MPAs and OECMs; this would contribute to the implementation and achievement of the objectives of the BBNJ Agreement and the 30x30 target.

5. Science, Knowledge and Innovation

- We commit to promoting marine sciences, open and interoperable data, traditional knowledge and endogenous knowledge, as well as innovation, in order to inform decision-making and improve the effectiveness of public policies.
- We support the strengthening of the scientific, technical and institutional capacities of universities, research centers, administrations and organizations in the region, in support of the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and efforts related to the 30x30 target.

6. Financing and Partnerships

- We call for enhanced mobilization of international support, including public and private financial resources, as well as the development of strategic partnerships to support the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans in West Africa.
- We encourage the coordinated exploration of innovative financing mechanisms, including blue bonds, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps and other instruments adapted to regional priorities.
- We encourage the identification, progressive reorientation or elimination of subsidies harmful to marine biodiversity, in accordance with relevant national and international frameworks.

7. Implementation of the Declaration

- We support, through a participatory approach, the continuation of work aimed at specifying the modalities for operationalizing the commitments of this Declaration, including, where appropriate, through a regional strategic guidance framework accompanied by indicative priorities and monitoring elements.
- We encourage the examination, in consultation with the stakeholders concerned, of options aimed at structuring an appropriate, flexible and evolving monitoring mechanism, according to the priorities retained.
- We invite technical and financial partners to continue supporting, over the long term, the efforts of States and regional institutions in support of the progressive implementation of the orientations arising from this Declaration.



Done in Nouakchott, on 27/04/2026

The participants in the High-Level Roundtable on the theme “Political Commitments to Accelerate the Implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal 30x30 Target in West Africa”.