

**MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUE ON THE OCCASION OF THE WACA PROGRAM LAUNCH  
OF NOVEMBER 2018**

1. Considering that the coastal zones of West Africa and beyond contain most of the region's capital cities, that they account for more than one third of the region's gross domestic product, and are home to more than one third of its population and likely more than half by 2050;
2. Highlighting that current economic, demographic, and urban growth is causing major development in infrastructure and other strategic resources and sectors;
3. Recognizing that growing pressure from various sectors is leading to the rapid degradation of coastal ecosystems, a scramble for available land resources, and conflict over the use of these resources;
4. Remembering that coastal ecosystems are fragile and play a vital role in supplying the environmental goods and services necessary for the development of our societies and that natural infrastructures such as mangroves, dunes, and coastal lagoons play a part in fixing coastlines and reducing natural disaster risks;
5. Considering that risks to coastal areas are projected to rise in coming years and decades due to growing social and economic challenges and to climate change, including rising sea levels and increases in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events;
6. Considering the concern related to the specific vulnerability of Small Island Developing States;
7. Realizing the major role played by land use and land use planning in coastal erosion;
8. Recognizing the growing need for cross-boundary and regional cooperation to preserve natural barriers and advantages derived from coastal ecosystems;
9. Considering the significant financial resources needed to ensure sustainable coastal management in the region and the recognized capacities of technical and financial partners;
10. Considering proven scientific expertise available at national, regional, and international level in order to assist in the management of coastal risks in West Africa;
11. Recognizing the part played by the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central, and Southern Africa Region (1981 Abidjan Convention) as the institutional and political framework for managing and protecting coastal regions;
12. Recalling Article 10 of the above Convention, which calls on signatory countries to implement integrated coastal management and "take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, mitigate, and control coastal erosion in the Convention area caused by human activities such as land reclamation or coastal development;"
13. Remembering the 2011 Dakar Declaration, which established the West African Coastal Observatory at the Center for Ecological Monitoring following a regional study on coastline monitoring commissioned by the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);

14. Using the West African Coastal Area Management Plan prepared by WAEMU with support from IUCN and approved under the Dakar Declaration, and its updated version adopted at the meeting of Environment Ministers of West African Coastal Observation Mission countries in Abidjan in 2018;
15. Recalling the work carried out on adapting coastal areas to climate change risks and the contributions of technical and financial partners to this work in preparing for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris in 2015, reflected in contributions determined at national level;
16. Recalling the contributions of various technical and financial partners in support of the efforts of countries in terms of these contributions, including the World Bank's Africa Climate Business Plan launched at COP21;
17. Recalling the regional ministerial launch in Lomé in 2016 of the West Africa Coastal Area Erosion and Adaptation Project in partnership with UEMOA, IUCN, the World Bank, and the Nordic Development Fund;
18. Recalling the 10th decision of the 12th Abidjan Convention Conference of the Parties in 2017, supporting and promoting the World Bank's implementation of the West Africa Coastal Areas Management Program (WACA).
19. Recalling the statement of the WAEMU Conference of Heads of State and Government in Lomé in 2018 on the resilience of West Africa coastal areas, which called for "diligent implementation of the investment project for the resilience of West Africa coastal areas and its expansion to other States" and for "the creation of a WACA platform to serve as a reference framework for political dialogue and advocacy in order to mobilize the expertise and financial resources required;"
20. Thanking the Government of Senegal for hosting the launch of the WACA Platform;

**We, Ministers and Representatives of Ministers of the Environment of Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, and São Tome and Príncipe.**

21. Reaffirm our full support for all components of the WACA Program, including the implementation of the Resilience Investment Project (WACA ResIP) and the construction of the WACA Platform currently underway;
22. Call on all the States of West Africa and beyond to join the WACA Platform currently being built in order to accelerate the transfer of knowledge, scale up financing, and stimulate high-level political dialogue on protecting West African coasts;
23. Ask countries throughout the region to take into consideration the many opportunities for knowledge, financing, and dialogue offered by the WACA Platform in terms of improving coastal risk management;
24. Commit our respective governments to mobilizing budget resources, harmonizing various economic sectors' priorities and usage practices in coastal areas, and creating conditions favorable to private investment to tackle the challenges facing West African coasts;

25. Ask regional organizations, particularly WAEMU and the Economic Community of West African States to continue with their integration and cooperation efforts through the WACA Program to guarantee the sustainability of natural marine and coastal capital and of coastal ecosystems;
26. request that technical and financial partners continue their coordination efforts and increase their involvement in the WACA Program in order to play their part in existing and future multi-sector and cross-border projects;
27. Reiterate the vital role played by citizens and their representatives, academic and scientific communities, non-governmental organizations, and other actors in civil society and the public and private sectors in raising awareness of sustainable coastal management;
28. Call on governments to strengthen regional coordination and collaboration in the management of West African coasts through the WACA Program and to systematically consider their actions from a regional perspective;
29. Call on governments to transform the West African Coastal Observation Mission into a Regional Observatory sustained by dedicated funds in order to make advocacy information available to decision-makers and citizens with a view to improved adoption and effective application of the West African Coastal Area Management Plan;
30. Commit to creating a multi-sector investment plan for each country that will identify priorities for managing erosion, floods, and pollution and be used to inform partners of needs in expertise and financing;
31. Commit to strengthening national regulations on social and environmental safeguards in public and private investments in coastal areas;
32. Commit to adapting nationally determined contributions to take account of challenges to coastal areas arising from climate change;
33. Commit to working together toward a shared vision to ensure the preservation, sustainable management, and resilience of coastal ecosystems along all the region's coastlines.

**Text adopted in Dakar, Senegal, on November 8, 2018**