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Inputs by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to the background note for the 2020 United Nations Conference on SDG 14

- Coastal and marine resources provide significant opportunities for livelihood and socio-economic development in Africa, particularly for coastal communities, including small-scale fishers. According to FAO estimates, the fishing sector in Africa employed 12.3 million in 2014, comprising 2.1 per cent of Africa's population between the ages of 15 and 64 years.
- However, challenges remain in meeting growing challenges such as pollution, declining fish stocks and illegal fisheries, climate change and biodiversity loss as well as weak governance frameworks. These challenges among others continue to hinder progress towards SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development".
- Aspiration 1 of the African Union Agenda 2063 and its first ten year implementation plan aiming at achieving "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" places significant emphasis on blue economy and sustainable use of marine resources, with indicative strategies for implementation by African countries at the continental, regional and national levels, including by African small island developing states (SIDS).
- Aspiration 1 and its priority areas cover critical topics such as reducing oceans pollution from both land and sea-based sources and economic valuation of natural blue capital for growth or value addition.
- In particular, African countries have committed through Goal 6 "Blue/ ocean economy for accelerated economic growth" to achieve specific targets such as increasing value addition in the fisheries sector and double the contribution of eco-tourism to GDP as well as increasing marine bio-technology contribution to GDP by at least 1.5 times the 2013 levels in real terms and generating at least 10% of renewable energy sources from wave energy.
- Furthermore, under Goal 7: "Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities", African countries have prioritized Bio-diversity, conservation and sustainable natural resource management, aiming at putting in place "Binding agreements on fair, equitable and sustainable management and exploitation of trans-boundary natural resources (water, parks and oceans).
- In this regard, the 2014 African Union's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy provides a broad framework for the protection and sustainable exploitation of the African Maritime Domain for wealth creation. The Strategy represents a tool to address Africa's maritime challenges for sustainable

development and competitiveness. It seeks to develop a thriving maritime economy and realizing the full potential of sea-based activities in an environmentally sustainable manner.

- The Strategy seeks to address many of the challenges facing its marine and coastal ecosystems such as toxic waste dumping and illegal and unregulated fishing as well as limited protected areas for marine biodiversity which has profound negative impact on Africa's inclusive growth and sustainable development.
- In light of the challenges facing African countries in accelerating progress towards SDG 14, it is imperative to strengthen the global partnership for development and scale up international support to African countries to implement SDG 14 and relevant AU instruments, particularly the AU Integrated Maritime Strategy and other sub-regional frameworks such as the 1985 Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (Nairobi Convention).
- There is also a need for enhancing international support to African national statistical and data systems to strengthen their capacities in collecting, analyzing and using reliable data and statistics and address the gaps in data on the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 14 and its 10 targets.
