

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

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INFORMATION NOTE  
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ABIDJAN CONVENTION TO THE CITE

This document has been submitted by Guinea and Nigeria in relation to agenda item 15.1.\*

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\* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Contributions of the Abidjan Convention to the CITES

Signed in 1981, 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 - the Abidjan Convention - is an intergovernmental treaty established by governments in West, Central and Southern Africa which covers a marine area from Mauritania to South Africa with a coastline of just over 14,000 km. The mandate of the Abidjan Convention is to protect, conserve and develop the Abidjan Convention area and its resources for the benefit and well-being of its people.

In other words, the Convention provides an overarching legal framework for all marine-related programs in West, Central and Southern Africa and as such, is directly involved in the protection of endangered plants and animals in the West, Central and Southern African regions.

Indeed, as mentioned in Article 11 of the Convention on Specially Protected Areas, the Contracting Parties shall *“take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve rare or fragile ecosystems as well as the habitat of depleted, threatened or endangered species and other marine life”*. The Convention is also involved in pollution prevention through Article 7 on Pollution from Land-Based Sources which is directly affecting the various species' habitats. The Article states that *“the Contracting Parties shall take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce, combat and control pollution of the Convention area”*.

In addition, as increased trade (local and international) and consumption of aquatic wildlife became a significant and immediate threat to aquatic species, including threatened and/or protected species, the Abidjan Convention, together with its partners, established the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership (AAWP). The main objective of the AAWP will be to address the issue of trade, capture, consumption and other uses of aquatic species in the Convention area and will be further detailed below.

In this context, the CITES CoP presents an ideal forum to enhance linkages and synergies between the Convention and the work of the CITES and to bring together government, civil society stakeholders, conservation donors and decision makers to commit support to ongoing efforts for the sustainable management of threatened aquatic wildlife and habitats in the West, Central and Southern African regions. Furthermore, the participation of the Abidjan Convention to the session on Multilateral Environmental Agreement will enable the Convention to:

1. Disseminate and promote the additional Protocol and the Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership and related information on policies, practices and research needs;
2. Acquire support and commitments from high level government officials at national, regional and global levels willing to move for recognition of endangered Aquatic Wildlife issues as being of high economic, political, strategic and investment importance;
3. Engage potential donors and development partners towards identifying concrete options for ensuring sustained financial and technical partnerships for success of this initiative along the Atlantic coast of Africa.

## The Additional Protocols to the Abidjan Convention

Over the past 6 years, the Convention has accelerated the process of developing regional cooperation instruments and successfully organized the Conference of the Plenipotentiaries from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 during which the Contracting Parties signed the following additional protocols on:

- Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities -Bassam Protocol-
- Norms and Environmental Standards for offshore Oil and Gas activities -Malabo Protocol-
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management -Pointe Noire Protocol-
- Sustainable Mangrove Management -Calabar Protocol-

These newly signed Protocols represent a turning point in the management of the African coastal and marine biodiversity and shall apply to the 22 Parties to the Abidjan Convention as defined under national legislation. The Pointe Noire and the Calabar Protocols both intend to improve the sustainable management and conservation of the regions' ecosystems and habitats which are hosting a large range of fragile ecosystems and threatened aquatic wildlife such as the sea turtles or the manatees. The successful transposition and implementation of these instruments will ultimately contribute to the implementation of the CITES in the West, Central and Southern African regions by protecting the habitats and supporting the conservation of threatened aquatic wildlife.

### Pointe Noire Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Marine and coastal areas are home to many human activities such as deforestation for various purposes, maritime transport, fishing and aquaculture, renewable energy production, extraction of raw materials, water sports and tourism. Experts have been warning for several years about the threats these activities pose to the marine and coastal environment.

The Pointe Noire Protocol shall apply to the coastal zone of the 22 Parties to the Abidjan Convention as defined under national legislation, which may include littoral areas, river basins, inland waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf under the jurisdiction of the States Parties. The main objectives of the Pointe Noire Protocol will be to:

- 1) Promote integrated planning and coordinated development of the coastal zone including insular belts and river basins;
- 2) Maintain the integrity of insular belts, coastlines and river basins for the benefit of present and future generations;
- 3) Ensure sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems services including freshwater ecosystems;
- 4) Promote and maintain ecosystem resilience, including appropriate protection of sensitive areas, in the face of human activities, natural hazards and climate change;
- 5) Prevent and reduce pollution from air, land and sea-based sources.

### Calabar Protocol on Sustainable Mangrove Management

The coastal and marine ecosystems of the Convention area are a rich source of biological diversity and

natural resources that support livelihoods. However, the high dependence of the coastal communities on the various natural resources for their livelihoods is causing the depletion of living resources, deterioration of water quality, loss of critical habitats – including mangroves - and increasing levels of eutrophication. Loss of mangrove habitat reduces fish spawning grounds, which leads to the further intensification of fisheries operations and depletion of biodiversity and available marine resources.

Based on the Parties' request, the Convention engaged and carried out a concerted and collaborative process to develop the Calabar Protocol which was also approved and signed by the Convention's Parties during in July 2019. The main objectives of the Calabar Protocol will be to:

1. Harmonize the principles and set the modalities for managing the resources of the mangrove ecosystem;
2. Establish the rules for environmental protection and conservation of natural resources, including mangroves;
3. Define the framework and modalities for stakeholder participation in the decision-making process for managing the mangrove ecosystem;
4. Define the modalities for the review and approval of projects and programmes, and other initiatives for the use of the mangrove ecosystems.

### **Bassam Protocol on Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities**

In addition, the effects of discharges and wastes or run-off from industrial, agricultural and, urban sources and from exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons, and minerals, are also emphasizing the physical alteration and destruction of habitats and the rich living resources of the marine and coastal environment of the Western, Central and Southern African region. There is therefore an urgent need to address the various land-based sources and activities that may result in pollution, destruction or degradation of the coastal and marine environment with a view to preventing, reducing, mitigating and controlling such pollution which is directly impacting the quality of the habitat and its biodiversity.

The objective of the Bassam Protocol is to prevent, reduce, mitigate and control pollution from land-based sources and activities or emanating from any other land-based source to protect and sustain the marine and coastal environment of the Convention area.

### **The Abidjan Aquatic Wildlife Partnership (AAWP)**

The AAWP is a non-binding, multi-stakeholder partnership which directly supports the implementation of the African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa, by addressing the issue of trade, capture, consumption and other uses of aquatic species, including threatened and/or protected species across West, Central and Southern Africa, through coordinated, collaborative and effective action at local, regional and international levels.

The AAWP was launched at the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals. The AAWP was catalyzed by a recommendation at the 13<sup>th</sup> CoP to the Abidjan Convention in March 2013 that organizations with a shared interest in Aquatic Wildlife band together to achieve stronger results and a more effective use of limited resources along Africa's Atlantic coast.

More recently, the AAWP Action Plan has been developed by the members of the Partnership for adoption at the 13 Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan Convention to include:

- Design of concrete interventions, for research, policy development or enforcement, and capacity strengthening of stakeholders;
- Strengthening partnerships and coordination between Multilateral Environmental Agreements/Conventions, conservation institutions, countries and regions, as well as across sectors for more effective implementation;
- Establishing sustainable funding mechanisms for priority interventions and piloting best practices
- Achieving political and institutional buy in from all stakeholders especially national and regional decision makers.

In the meantime, AAWP members has already initiated concerted efforts to tackle issues where irrefutable evidence points to the need to act now, such as the conservation of sea turtles or manatees. This effort will engage local volunteers and community groups, private sector, government agencies and regional and international organization through grants issued by USAID and IUCN, within 2019.