



AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION



**MARITIME ORGANISATION OF WEST AND
CENTRAL AFRICA**

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE AFRICAN MARITIME TRANSPORT CHARTER ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE, 18 – 19 DECEMBER 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The African Union Commission (AUC) and the Maritime Organisation for West and Central Africa (MOWCA) jointly organized a Working Group Meeting on the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter which took place on 18 and 19 December 2013 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.

2. The meeting was convened to particularly address the need to speed up entry into force and implementation of provisions of the African Maritime Transport Charter. It was attended by officials and experts of the African Union Commission (AUC), MOWCA, Abuja Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Economic and Monetary Commission of Central Africa (CEMAC), West African Economic and Monetary Union of (UEMOA), International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Regional Academy of Maritime Sciences and Technology of Abidjan, Representatives of Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo and Cote d'Ivoire,.

The attendance list is attached herewith.

II. OPENING CEREMONY

3. The opening session was presided by Hon. Parfait Aimé COUSSOUD-MAVOUNGOU, Deputy Minister of Transport of the Republic of Congo in his capacity as Deputy Chair of MOWCA. A minute of silence was observed in tribute to Nelson R. MANDELA, the First black President of the Republic of South Africa, a historic African and international figure in the fight against apartheid.

4. The first message was from Mr. Aboubakari Baba Moussa, Director of Infrastructure and Energy of the AUC and Mr. Alain Michel LUVAMBANO, the Secretary-General of MOWCA. Mr. BABA-MOUSSA drew the attention of participants to the critical problem of non-ratification of the Charter. He underscored the need to take concrete action to canvass for the required number of instruments of ratification for its entry into force and put in place the appropriate institutional and legal frameworks to ensure its effective implementation.

5. Mr. Alain Michel LUVAMBANO, Secretary-General of MOWCA gave an account of the actions undertaken by his organisation in collaboration with other institutions including the AUC to bring the previous and the revised Charters to existence. He also spoke of the efforts made by MOWCA to promote cooperation and establishment of a continental coordination framework for the development of maritime transport in Africa.

6. In his address, Hon. COUSSOUD-MAVOUNGOU highlighted the special importance and historic place of maritime transport in driving socio-economic development and poverty eradication in the Africa. He gave a lengthy account of the efforts made to develop the maritime sector in the continent and called upon the participants in the meeting to play their roles strongly in order to ensure that they maintain the momentum for the benefit of the peoples of Africa.

III. WORKING SESSIONS

7. The experts addressed the following agenda items:

1. Introduction of the (2010) revised African Maritime Transport Charter
2. Consideration of actions to speed up ratification of the revised Charter
3. Consideration of Draft Rules of Procedure for the Follow-up (Oversight) Committee
4. Brainstorming on the options for the creation of a continental coordination structure for maritime transport in Africa

ITEMS 1&2: PRESENTATION OF THE REVISED CHARTER AND CONSIDERATION OF ACTIONS TO SPEED UP ITS RATIFICATION

8. The meeting deliberated on the proposals made by the presenter and decided as follows:

1. Recognised the need to have 2014 declared as the year for the accelerated actions for the ratification and coming into force of the Charter and in so doing recommended that the AUC prepares a submission to the relevant organ of the African Union for this decision to be taken. And in addition to this, the meeting recommended for a possible designation of a champion for the campaign at Heads of States and or at Ministerial levels.
2. Welcomed the offer of MOWCA to partner with the AUC in the delivery of the following specific actions:
 - 2.1 Creation and launch of a webpage dedicated to the acceleration of the ratification process;
 - 2.2 Fielding of missions to targeted countries.
3. That the AUC to compile a dossier to be used in all Charter communication and this dossier to include among other relevant documents, the following:
 - 2.3 Cover note on the need for ratification;
 - 2.4 Revised Charter;
 - 2.5 A general overview of the revised Charter;

2.6 Key actions to be undertaken by the AUC in the build-up to the coming into force of the Charter.

4. Plan of Action

Activity	Deadline	Responsibility
Compilation of a dossier to be used in all Charter communication	January 2014	AUC
Addressing reminders to States and regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the urgency of ratification of the Charter	January 2014	AUC
Putting in place a communication strategy for the revised Charter	January 2014	AUC / MOWCA
Declaration of 2014 as Year for the accelerated ratification and coming into effect of the Charter	January 2014	AUC
Creation and launch of a webpage dedicated to the acceleration of the ratification process	January 2014	AUC / MOWCA
Designation of champions for speeding up the ratification process of the Charter	February 2014	AUC
Fielding of missions to targeted countries	January – March 2014	AUC / MOWCA
Evaluation of the campaign	April 2014	AUC
Marking of the coming into effect of the Charter	July 2014 (coincide with the month on when the Charter was adopted by Heads of State) or By October 2014 (Coincide with the month when the Charter was approved by the Ministerial conference).	AUC

5. Other activities to be taken for the entry into force of the Charter:

Activities	Responsibility for coordination and cooperation
Informal Think-tank on African Maritime Policy	AUC
Invitation to Academies to establish an African Centre for Maritime Policy and Research	AUC
Implementation strategy of the African Maritime Transport Charter (see Article 43)	AUC
Development of a draft model legislation for the implementation of the Charter	AUC and IMO
Review of the draft Constitution of the Association of African Maritime Administrations (AAMA).	AUC
Establishment of a monitoring mechanism stipulated in Article 44	AUC

ITEMS 3: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

9. Regarding the operationalisation of the Oversight Committee, the African Union Commission presented the details of the commitments of States and the mechanism for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Charter, as stipulated in Article 44.

10. This mechanism involves the national level where countries should establish national action plans and then regional and sub-regional organizations which should also develop roadmaps and action plans and ensure implementation. Finally, the Commission which serves as the main coordinating body should effectively perform its roles of coordination and harmonization and create the Oversight Committee of the Charter, in accordance with Article 44. To that end, draft Rules of Procedure were discussed by experts.

11. In the discussions, it was agreed that the African Union Commission should finalize the draft rules of procedure of the Charter Oversight Committee taking into account the comments and recommendations of experts including:

- Compliance with regulations and procedures of the African Union;
- Designation of focal points in RECs and specialized organisations;
- Provision of an article on funding sources necessary for the operation of the Oversight Committee;
- Interaction between the Oversight Committee and similar bodies established in the RECs and specialized organizations;
- Establishment of a working group to finalize the online draft for submission to the next Conference of African Ministers of Transport for approval;
- Consideration of the possibility of involving the civil society and private sector;
- Inclusion of articles on the role of the Chairman and the secretariat of the Committee

ITEMS 4: BRAINSTORMING ON OPTIONS FOR THE CREATION OF A CONTINENTAL COORDINATION STRUCTURE FOR MARITIME TRANSPORT IN AFRICA

12. Following a presentation on the need for coordination of maritime transport in Africa, experts reflected deeply on the various initiatives undertaken by MOWCA for the other parts of the continent. They, nevertheless, agreed to give priority to the current urgency on ratification of the Charter and its entry into force soon. Consideration of this issue should, hence, be pursued in the future.

IV. CLOSING

13. In his closing remarks, Mr. Aboubakari BABA-MOUSSA urged participants to implement the commitments made during this meeting given the importance of the maritime sub-sector to African economies. He thanked the delegates for the good work done during these two days, highlighting the spirit of unity and commitment to meeting the deadlines given. Finally, he wished them safe journeys back and Happy Christmas and New Year Holidays.

14. Mr. Alain Michel LUVAMBANO, the Secretary-General of MOWCA also thanked the participants and assured them of the availability of MOWCA for ensuring the achievement of the commitments taken. He also wished the participants safe return and a Joyous celebration of Christmas and New Year with blessings of The Almighty.