
The Commission

**ESTABLISHING A WEST AFRICAN COASTLINE OBSERVATORY FOR THE REDUCTION
OF COASTAL RISKS AND THE IMPACTS OF COASTAL EROSION**

Dakar Declaration

- Considering the importance of coastal areas in West African countries, home to most of the political and economic capital cities of our states and more than half of their population,
- Taking into account the concentration of vital economic activities of our countries along the coasts, such as fishing, international shipping and tourism,
- Recognizing that the rapidly increasing coastal population coupled with the amplification of pressure by different economic sectors, result into accelerated degradation of coastal ecosystems, a rush to ownership of the last available land resources, and conflicts for the use of resources,
- Concerned about the erosion observed, often causing severe social and economic impacts, forcing residential areas to be moved and rendering obsolete investments essential to the functioning of our economies,
- Taking into account the plausible increase of coastal hazards in the years and decades to come, resulting from increased social and economic stakes on the one hand and from the effects of climate change on the other hand, including the rising sea-level and the increased pace of extreme weather events,
- Recognizing the limited capacity for coastline monitoring and sharing of scientific information needed to establish coastal management and protection decisions to be made by our the governments of our countries
- Noting the fragility of coastal ecosystems, their importance in the provision of environmental goods and services essential to the development of our societies and the role of natural systems such as mangroves and coastal lagoons in fixing the coastline and in reducing risks of natural disasters,
- Recognizing the need for forward-looking work to anticipate constraints and future risks and provide the means to respond in a coherent approach to space planning, taking account of coastal ecosystems in an integrated regional approach to the development of the West African coastal area,
- Having cognizance of the regional study commissioned by the UEMOA and implemented by IUCN on the shoreline monitoring and the development of a master plan

for the West African coastline, and taking into account the recommendations of experts appointed by our countries, gathered in Dakar on Monday 16 and Tuesday 17 of May 2011 to review and validate the results of this work,

We, Ministers in charge of Environment and Coastal Erosion, representing the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, the Republic of Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin, gathered at Méridien President Hotel in Dakar on Wednesday May 18, 2011

1. Thank and congratulate the UEMOA for the quality of the work done, and for taking the initiative to conduct a regional study involving six non-member states alongside its five coastal Member States in order to get a broad and inclusive regional vision of coastal dynamics,
2. Approve all the work done, their results and the different mapping deliverables derived from them, recommend their wide dissemination into the public domain and that their presentation be made in particular to political authorities and scientists of each countries to promote their ownership and their transcription into national policies,
3. Make ours the proposal to establish as soon as possible the Observatory of the West African coastline to monitor the evolution of our coastal areas and guide decisions in terms of planning and coastal risk reduction,
4. Appreciate the proposal by Senegal to host the Observatory of the West African coastline within the Ecological Monitoring Centre in Dakar, and are committed to facilitate in our countries the production and sharing of information from a network of scientific and technical experts, including the academia,
5. Are requesting the UEMOA in unison to keep on its integration efforts, and requesting regional organizations and development partners involved in West Africa to give their technical and financial support for the implementation of the West African coastline development master plan.

Made in Dakar, on May 18, 2011

Ministers responsible for Environment of the UEMOA member states and guest States (The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, The Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana)

For the Secretary State for Sustainable Development, Guinea Bissau



Mme Maria Odete Rosa,
Chargée d'Affaires, Guinea Bissau Embassy, Dakar