

The African Union Commission's 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy

(2050 AIM-Strategy)

Samuel Kame-Domguia

Coordinator, 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIM-Strategy) Task Force,
African Union Commission

Introduction

Water covers more than two-thirds of the earth's surface and affects life everywhere. As the second biggest continent, Africa's 43 million km² area¹ covers one-fifth of the total surface of the earth. Its total length of coastline, including its islands, is over 26,000 nautical miles. Thirty-eight African countries are either coastal or island states while fifty-two of its over one hundred port facilities handle containers and other cargo. While African owned ships account for about 1.2% of world shipping by number and about 0.9% by gross tonnage, the ports handle only 6% of worldwide water borne cargo traffic and approximately 3% of the worldwide container traffic.

International trade is critical to many African economies, with over 90% of Africa's imports and exports conducted by sea. Over the past four decades, the volume of global sea borne trade has more than quadrupled. Ninety percent of world trade and two-thirds of energy supplies are carried by sea. The world's oceans and seas are interlinked, and any action in one sea or policy area that has a direct or indirect impact on the sea may result in positive or negative effects on other seas and policy areas. While over 46% of Africans live in absolute poverty—a figure that is still rising—fish make a vital contribution to the food and nutritional security of over 200 million Africans and provides income for over 10 million. Africa's export of fish and fishery products has not shown significant improvement in the past decade. Likewise, the increasingly intense use of the oceans and seas by various sectors, combined with climate change, has added to the pressure on the marine environment.



Considering the vast growth opportunities and the network of sea-lanes of enormous importance for Africa's security and prosperity, the governance of Africa's Maritime Domain (AMD) require innovative solutions and careful management systems to ensure its long-term sustainability, as well as the implementation of national and international regulations and instruments to address current challenges amidst new, shifting global dynamics (e.g. shifting geographic trade patterns, emerging economic powers, environmental dynamics, etc.).

Hence, in 2008, noticing that maritime matters were not given the appropriate importance in the quadrennial strategic plan of the African Union, in an integrative thinking change leadership process, the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy), which introduced the Blue Economy concept was developed.

After a series of African Expert and Ministerial-level meetings, the 2050 AIM Strategy was formally and unanimously adopted during the 22nd Assembly of African Union's Heads of States and Governments on 31 January 2014.

The Blue Economy concept outlined in the 2050 AIM Strategy is now considered by both the AU and the African Development Bank as the new frontline of Africa's renaissance.

Vision Statement

The overarching vision of the 2050 AIM Strategy is to foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing a thriving blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner.

Desired Strategic End State

- Increased wealth creation from AMD that positively contributes to socio-economic development;
- Increased national, regional and continental stability
- Collaborative, concerted, cooperative, coordinated, coherent and trust-building multilayered efforts to build blocks of maritime sector activities in concert with improving elements of maritime governance.



Goals

The 2050 AIM Strategy aims to achieve the following:

- a. A comprehensive understanding of existing and potential challenges, including allocation of resources to identified priorities over a pre-determined time-frame;
- b. A comprehensive, concerted, coherent and coordinated approach that improves maritime conditions with respect to environmental and socio-economic development as well as the capacity to generate wealth from sustainable governance of Africa's seas and oceans;
- c. A common template for the AU, the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms (RMs), and relevant organizations; and member states, to guide maritime review, budgetary planning and effective allocation of resources, in order to enhance maritime viability for an integrated and prosperous Africa; and
- d. A business plan that specifies milestones, capacity building targets and implementation requirements, including technical and financial support from within Africa and also from development partners.

Strategic Objectives

In keeping with the AU principles and values upheld in the Constitutive Act of the AU with applicable programs, the following objectives will guide the 2050 AIM Strategy's activities:

- a. Establish a Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone of Africa (CEMZA);
- b. Engage civil society and all other stakeholders to improve awareness on maritime issues;
- c. Enhance political will at community, national, regional and continental levels;
- d. Enhance wealth creation, and regional and international trade performance through maritime-centric capacity and capability building;
- e. Ensure security and safety of maritime transportation systems;
- f. Minimize environmental damage and expedite recovery from catastrophic events;

- g. Prevent hostile and criminal acts at sea, and coordinate/harmonize the prosecution of the offenders;
- h. Protect populations, including AMD heritage, assets and critical infrastructure from maritime pollution and dumping of toxic and nuclear waste;
- i. Improve Integrated Coastal Zone/Area Management in Africa;
- j. Promote the ratification, domestication and implementation of international legal instruments;
- k. Ensure synergies and coherence between sectoral policies within and between the RECs/RMs; and;
- l. Protect the right of access to sea and freedom of transit of goods for land-connected States.

Maritime Safety and Security Threats and Vulnerabilities

Among others, the threats and vulnerabilities in the AMD include:

- a. Transnational Organized Crimes in the maritime domain (including money laundering, illegal arms and drug traffic, piracy and armed robbery at sea, illegal oil bunkering/crude oil theft along African coasts, maritime terrorism, human trafficking, human smuggling and asylum seekers travelling by sea);
- b. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing - IUU Fishing - and overfishing, and Environmental Crimes (includes deliberate shipwrecking and oil spillage as well as dumping of toxic wastes);
- c. Natural disasters, marine environmental degradation and climate change;
- d. Strategic communications systems;
- e. Vulnerable legal framework; and
- f. Lack of and/or poorly maintained aids to navigation and modern hydrographic surveys, up-to date nautical charts and maritime safety information in a number of AU Member States.

State of Play in Maritime Security and the Fight against Piracy

While piracy off the coast of Somalia is declining, due to a number of key interventions, armed robbery of ships in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) is increasing.

East Africa

The Region in general has insufficient Maritime Domain Awareness and unreliable Maritime capability. Examples include navy, coastguard, and civilian maritime agencies. Furthermore, they lack a single agency or coordinating body that cooperates on the maritime security issues ie there are too many actors and programs that are uncoordinated. A pragmatic approach within the Somali context is needed.

West Africa

Much of the piracy that affects West Africa is a result of disorder that surrounds the regional oil industry. A large share of the recent piracy attacks targeted vessels carrying petroleum products. These vessels are attacked because there is a booming black market for fuel in West Africa. Without this market, there would be little point in attacking these vessels. There are indications that oil may also be smuggled outside the region.

The greatest risk is that piracy will become broadly popular. If the black market for fuel is sufficiently open, there are many dissidents, out of work fishermen, and marginalized youth who could be attracted to the trade.

The Yaounde Summit

The Yaoundé summit took place in June 2013 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, after the adoption of the 2050 AIM Strategy at Ministerial level in December 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During this Summit, Heads of State and Governments of ECCAS, ECOWAS, and CGG adopted the Yaoundé Code of Conduct related to the prevention and suppression of acts of Piracy, of armed robbery, against ships and maritime illegal activities in West Africa and Central Africa. The Code of Conduct was signed at the meeting by the Ministers and its implementation will be evaluated after a period of three years.



They also adopted the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECCAS, ECOWAS, and the CGG on safety and security in the maritime area of Central Africa and West Africa. This MoU was signed during the meeting by the Secretary-General of ECCAS, the President of the Commission ECOWAS and the Executive Secretary of the CGG.

The Heads of State and Governments also adopted and signed a Declaration on safety and security in the common maritime space called "Yaoundé Declaration".

Update since Summit

Implementation of the Code of Conduct: Follow up meetings have been held in an Interregional Working Group to determine an implementation plan for the regional maritime strategies. The RECs have met in Cameroon to establish a realistic budget for this work. The ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy was adopted on March 29, 2014. The ECCAS Central Africa Regional Centre for Maritime Security (CRESMAC) is due to become operational in December 2014 which will complete the activation of zones A and B in ECCAS. The GGC strategy is being finalised. The G7++FOGG have been asked to support the strategy by: a) raising awareness on these issues; b) financially supporting the Interregional Working Group; and c) providing financial and expertise support to the work of the three RECs on implementing their strategies.

Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre for the Gulf of Guinea (MTISC-GoG): This industry- led, multilateral, multinational, regionally owned centre is now under construction and will hopefully become operational soon. The centre will complement other regional capacity building initiatives by forming a trusted, single point of contact with the shipping industry and building a regional picture to be shared with other information sharing centres. On behalf of the team leading this work, the UK has requested international partners to consider contributing to the small funding requirements for this centre. The RECs have been asked to facilitate a meeting with the MTISC-GoG team to arrange how they will interact with the centre.

INTERPOL-Criminal Investigations: INTERPOL is actively engaged in pursuing investigations of maritime criminality in the Gulf of Guinea. Key to tackling maritime crime is information sharing to enable successful prosecutions. INTERPOL has asked partners and regional States to support their work of compiling a database and allowing for the investigation of crime scenes and interviewing suspects held in custody by regional police authorities. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) will soon begin a programme of work with States in the region to facilitate judicial reform and prosecutions.

The Inter-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC): The ICC was officially opened on the September 11, 2014.

The 2050 AIM Strategy is ongoing in its pursuit of a long-term vision of security and stability in the African region. Through fostering increased wealth creation from African waters, vast growth opportunities will arise from a blue economy that will provide much needed prosperity and security in the region. Improving maritime governance is an essential component of socio-economic development and must be catered to accordingly provide the continent with long-term growth and sustainability.



Endnotes

¹ Including the 13 million km² Exclusive Economic Zones of AU Member States

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