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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE ASSEMBLY DECISION ON THE 2050 AFRICA'S
INTEGRATED MARITIME (AIM) STRATEGY**

**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE ASSEMBLY DECISION ON THE 2050 AFRICA'S
INTEGRATED MARITIME STRATEGY**

A. BACKGROUND

1. It should be recalled that the Assembly in decision Assembly/AU/Dec.496 (XXII) adopted the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy during its Twenty Second Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2014. The vision of the 2050 AIM Strategy is to "foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing a sustainable thriving blue economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner."

2. The Assembly in the decision Assembly/AU/Dec.496 (XXII) cited above, inter alia, requested the Commission, within the framework of implementation, to carry out an evaluation of the structural and financial implications of the 2050 AIM Strategy and report thereon to the next session of the Assembly in June 2014.

3. This Progress Report summarizes the actions undertaken by the Commission in implementing the Assembly decision.

B. ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMISSION

4. Following the adoption of the 2050 AIM Strategy, the Chairperson of the Commission set up an Interdepartmental Team in the Commission due to the multi-sectoral and cross-cutting nature of the 2050 AIM Strategy. The Interdepartmental Team was set up to ensure synergy in the work of the Commission in order for it to effectively implement the 2050 Aim Strategy. In this regard, the Chairperson mandated the Office of the Legal Counsel (OLC) to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy through a Commission-wide consultation process on the way forward.

5. It should be recalled that there was a 2050 AIM Task Force that was established in May 2010 to facilitate the development of the Strategy.

6. Under the leadership of the OLC, the Interdepartmental Team met three (3) times - on 13 March 2014, 2 June 2014, and 10 June 2014. At these meetings, the Interdepartmental Team brainstormed on the implementation of the 2050 AIM Strategy and the Assembly decision.

7. The meeting also examined the structural and budgetary requirements for the implementation of the 2050 AIM Strategy. In this regard, the Interdepartmental Team

noted the outcome of the Second Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Maritime-related issues held on 6 December 2012 adopted the Addis Ababa Declaration, which inter alia, called for the establishment within the Commission, of a fully-fledged stand-alone Department of Maritime Affairs to comprehensively address cross-cutting and multifaced inland waterways, oceans and seas geostrategic challenges and opportunities. The Addis Ababa Declaration was endorsed by the Assembly in the decision Assembly/AU/Dec.496 (XXII) (**paragraph 6 of the Decision**)

8. The Interdepartmental Team agreed that there was need to develop both a short and long term structure for the implementation of the 2050 AIM Strategy. Both the short and long- term structure will have to be implemented gradually with the ultimate aim of being transformed into a Department in the Commission that is comprehensively charged with general maritime issues.

9. In addition, as is the practice, the Interdepartmental Team noted that the Commission will be required to consult with the Permanent Representative Committee and its relevant sub committees on the structure and financial implications an eventual department.

10. In this regard, the Interdepartmental Team agreed that more time was needed to finalize the development of the short and long term structure and financial implications due to the cross-cutting nature of maritime issues and to ensure that every stakeholder Department and Directorate in the Commission feeds into the process. The finalized structure and its financial implications would need to be submitted for consideration during the January 2015 Summit after consultation with the PRC and its relevant sub-committees on the matter.

11. In the interim, the Interdepartmental Team is of the considered view that the Commission's decision to place the Coordination of the implementation of the AIM 2050 Strategy under the OLC required that the experts working on the 2050 AIM Strategy Task Force prior to the Assembly decision should be placed under the oversight of the OLC.

C. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

i) Challenges

12. The Decision on the 2050 AIM Strategy was adopted in January 2014 by the Assembly. At this time, the budget for both 2013 and 2014 had already been adopted.

However, the 2050 AIM Strategy identified some critical activities that should be undertaken some of which are:

- a) The establishment of a Special Task Force to prepare the technical details for the early implementation of the Combined Maritime Exclusive Zone;
- b) Consultations to be undertaken by the Chairperson of the Union and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms to spur adherence and garner the widest possible support for the implementation of the Strategy;
- c) The celebration of the African Day of the Seas and Oceans on 25 July of each year;
- d) Sensitization of Member States, that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify relevant AU and international instruments;
- e) Reinforcing the capacity of Member States to manage their Exclusive Economic Zones;
- f) Fostering inter-agency cooperation at all levels, to address the challenges and opportunities in the African maritime domain.

13. In addition, some of the experts who were working on the development of the 2050 AIM Strategy have been retained and are contributing to the process of implementing the Strategy but without any continuing assurance of their contracts.

14. Thus, the lack of a stand-alone budget for the Strategy or in the OLC for coordinating the implementation of the Decision on the Strategy budget for 2014 and 2015 poses an enormous challenge to the Commission in the implementation of the 2050 AIM Strategy.

ii) Opportunities

15. The adoption of the 2050 AIM Strategy and the establishment of the Interdepartmental Team on its implementation present a window of opportunity for the continent through the Commission to address the challenges and opportunities in the African maritime domain. The adoption of the Strategy has raised tremendous interest in Member States and in the international community. It is therefore very crucial to ensure that the momentum gained should not be lost.

16. It needs recalling that the Assembly in its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.511 (XXII) adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2014 underscored the need in incorporate in Agenda 2063, strategies for optimal management of the immense resources of the oceans and seas bordering Africa, based on the 2050 AIM Strategy.

17. Some Regional Economic Communities in the spirit of the Strategy have also started to adopt Integrated maritime Strategies In this regard, the Economic community of Western African States (ECOWAS) adopted its Integrated Maritime Strategy on 29 March 2014.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

18. In view of the above, the Commission recommends to the Executive Council to:

- i) **TAKE NOTE** of the Commission's Progress Report on the implementation of the Assembly decision on the Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) 2050 Strategy;
- ii) **REQUEST** the Commission in consultation with PRC to facilitate the establishment of a Strategic Task Force composed of Representatives of Member States, the Commission and the RECs by the end of October 2014, with a mandate to consider the technical details of the AIM 2050 Strategy and propose a road map for the incremental implementation of the strategy in conformity with International Maritime Law;
- iii) In this regard **ALSO REQUEST** the Commission to invite Member States to indicate by the end of September 2014, their willingness to serve on the Strategic Task Force;
- iv) **WELCOME** the establishment by the Commission of an Interdepartmental Team under the coordination of the Office of the Legal Counsel (OLC);
- v) **FURTHER REQUEST** the Commission to prepare a draft supplementary budget for the year 2014 and 2015 for consideration by the PRC, to enable the Strategic Task Force to meet;
- vi) **COMMEND** those Member States that have seconded experts at their own expense to the Commission to assist with the implementation of the AIM 2050 Strategy and **ALSO FURTHER REQUEST** the Commission to invite

other Member States willing to second experts on maritime related issues at their own expense to do the same.

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