

Opening remarks

Director, ECA Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa, Prof. Said Adejumobi

African Union Regional Delegate to Southern Africa,

Representative of the Southern African Development Community,

Representative of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa,

UN Resident Coordinator in Mauritius

Representatives of United Nations Agencies in Southern Africa;

Representatives of Intergovernmental Organisations,

Colleagues from the Government of the Republic of Mauritius

Representatives of the Private Sector,

Delegates from the Member States of SADC,

Distinguished Guests and Representatives of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is a privilege for me to participate in this 24th session of the Inter-Governmental Committee of Experts of Southern Africa.
2. Effective management of our oceans is a unique challenge. In view of its cross-cutting nature, the blue economy offers us the opportunity to address complex and inter-connected challenges without compromising economic growth.
3. There is no doubt that a blue economy approach centered on regional integration and cooperation has the potential to significantly contribute to economic diversification and growth.
4. Challenges such as climate change and increased greenhouse gas emissions linked to human activity have considerable effects on the ocean. These impacts include amongst others issues such as global warming, acidification and rising sea levels.
5. Ocean acidification linked to greenhouse gas emissions contributes in coral reef degradation.
6. These impacts are not only threatening the hard won developments achieved so far in the LDCs, SIDS and Africa and their abilities to meet the Sustainable Development Goals but also the development of the ocean economy.
7. Our vision to fully realise the economic potential of this region will increasingly depend on the coordinated and inclusive approach.

8. I would like to place on record that the elaboration of the policy handbook on the Blue Economy demonstrates that UNECA is playing a key role in stimulating a sustainable and inclusive blue growth.

9. It relates to the promotion of the sustainable use, management and conservation of aquatic and marine ecosystems as well as establishing of a common vision that would make this sector a driver for balanced economic development in this region.

10. The agenda of this meeting clearly portrays that our commitment for the advancement of the ocean economy has gathered irresistible momentum.

11. Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to conclude by thanking the UNECA for fostering cooperation and building capacity in this region for better harnessing our ocean's wealth.

12. I am convinced that these efforts would yield shared benefits for one and all.

13. I now have the privilege to declare the session open and wish you all a fruitful deliberation.