Unitar Online Catalogue

African Maritime Governance Forum

Peace

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□□ :	2 Days
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he United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is pleased to convene the 2026 edition of the African Maritime Governance Forum: Advancing Maritime Security through the Yaoundé Architecture, the Djibouti Code of Conduct and Inclusive Maritime Governance, a two-day, implementation-oriented platform for governments, regional organisations and partners working across maritime security, maritime governance and the Blue Economy. The Forum will

take place in Dakar, Senegal, on 14–15 December 2026, with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office.

Africa's maritime domain underpins trade, regional integration, coastal livelihoods and sustainable Blue Economy development. Across the Gulf of Guinea, the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean, evolving security risks also affect critical maritime infrastructure, including ports, subsea communications cables, offshore energy installations, pipelines and strategically important shipping routes. Physical, cyber and hybrid threats call for coordinated approaches to risk assessment, maritime surveillance, preparedness and resilience, alongside sound governance and environmental stewardship.

Africa has already laid important foundations. The Yaoundé Architecture ('YA'), including the Yaoundé Code of Conduct ('YCoC'), and the Djibouti Code of Conduct ('DCoC') are Africa's two complementary regional maritime governance and security frameworks, and their complementary strengths offer a unique opportunity for closer cooperation, in full respect of their respective mandates and regional ownership. By facilitating the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and lessons learned between the Gulf of Guinea and the Western Indian Ocean, the Forum aims to strengthen institutional cooperation, enhance Maritime Domain Awareness ('MDA') and maritime surveillance, reinforce the protection of critical maritime infrastructure, promote legal and policy coherence and support sustainable capacity development, contributing to the African Union's Agenda 2063, the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy ('2050 AIM Strategy') and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ('SDGs').

The Forum builds on the momentum of previous African maritime conferences, in particular the 2025 Conference on Maritime Security in Accra, convened by UNITAR. Its guiding question is a practical one: how can political dialogue be translated into implementation? The Forum will take stock of progress on the Accra recommendations, identify outstanding challenges and agree on a limited number of regional priorities. Particular attention will be given to the ongoing review of the YCoC within the wider YA, and to practical cooperation with the DCoC. The review remains under the leadership and decision-making authority of the relevant African institutions; the Forum will not seek to endorse or adopt revisions.

Recognising that maritime governance extends well beyond the maritime security sector, the Forum adopts a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, creating a platform for dialogue across institutional and sectoral boundaries. Rather than a broad survey of maritime security issues, it will connect regional

policy priorities with operational experience and targeted partnerships, with a view to producing a short, actionable set of follow-up measures.

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The overall objective of the Forum is to provide an implementation-oriented platform that moves African institutions and partners from dialogue to practical cooperation, and to a short, regionally owned set of follow-up measures.

Specifically, the Forum aims to:

- Take stock of progress on the Accra recommendations, identify outstanding challenges and agree on a limited number of regional priorities
- Advance the harmonisation of regional maritime cooperation, supporting African-led cooperation within the YA and the DCoC, with particular attention to the ongoing review of the YCoC, and encouraging the exchange of practical lessons and policy coherence while respecting distinct regional mandates and decision-making processes
- Strengthen digital innovation and maritime surveillance, promoting interoperable MDA, satellite-enabled and coastal monitoring, vessel tracking, timely alerts and responsible information sharing, and considering how existing national and regional centres can better support evidence-based decisions, early warning and coordination
- Promote maritime resilience, infrastructure protection and sustainability, strengthening the protection of ports, subsea cables, offshore energy facilities and pipelines and the safety of strategic shipping routes, through risk assessment, cybersecurity, public–private information exchange, incident reporting and coordinated responses to physical, cyber and hybrid threats
- Foster inclusive partnerships and African ownership, strengthening cooperation among governments, regional organisations, academia, the private sector, civil society, youth and women’s networks, coastal communities and development partners
- Integrate Blue Economy sustainability and inclusion across the Forum’s discussions, including environmental stewardship, resilient coastal communities and inclusive participation, consistent with Agenda 2063, the 2050 AIM Strategy and the SDGs
- Translate the dialogues into up to three practical priority actions, with proposed regional leads, supporting partners and indicative next steps, as recommendations for consideration by the competent institutions rather

than binding commitments

The Forum is grounded in UNITAR’s commitment to practical, evidence-based learning and capacity development. It is organised around three connected priorities: (i) African-led maritime governance and regional cooperation, including the review of the YCoC and engagement with the DCoC; (ii) MDA and the protection of critical maritime infrastructure; and (iii) partnerships and practical implementation. Blue Economy resilience, sustainability and inclusive participation inform each priority rather than forming separate tracks.

The two-day programme prioritises substantive dialogue and decision-oriented working sessions over numerous separate panels:

- **Day 1 – High-Level Leadership and Regional Governance Dialogue:** Ministers, senior officials and regional institutions take stock of the Accra recommendations, exchange perspectives relevant to the YCoC review and identify practical cooperation opportunities with the DCoC
- **Day 2 (morning) – MDA and Critical Maritime Infrastructure Dialogue:** a focused exchange among maritime authorities, regional centres and industry on surveillance, information sharing, subsea cables, pipelines, offshore installations, ports and shipping routes, including physical, cyber and hybrid risks
- **Day 2 (afternoon) – Implementation Policy Lab:** a facilitated working session that translates the preceding dialogues into up to three practical priority actions, with proposed regional leads, supporting partners and realistic follow-up through existing mechanisms
- **Cross-Cutting Knowledge Exchange:** short, targeted examples of satellite-enabled MDA, regional coordination and public–private incident reporting that inform the dialogues and the policy lab
- **Targeted Partnership Exchange:** infrastructure operators, regional institutions, development partners and technical experts identify feasible cooperation opportunities within the scheduled sessions
- **Closing and Follow-Up:** regional stakeholders review the proposed priorities, identify responsible institutions and agree on a realistic process for taking the recommendations forward

Participants will identify realistic actions that build on existing regional arrangements rather than establish parallel structures. The Forum is expected to deliver shared priorities for cooperation between the YA and the DCoC, a concise set of practical recommendations on MDA and infrastructure resilience, targeted partnerships linked to identified implementation needs, a shortlist of feasible capacity-development and technical-assistance opportunities, and a concise follow-up matrix with a clear pathway to review progress through existing regional frameworks. Its success will be measured by the relevance, ownership and feasibility of the priorities agreed, not by the number of topics covered.

The Forum is aligned with key continental and international frameworks, including the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and 2050 AIM Strategy, the United Nations SDGs, the Yaoundé Architecture and the Djibouti Code of Conduct.

In-person participation is subject to application and confirmation. Participation is free of charge. The Forum will take place in person in Dakar, Senegal, on 14–15 December 2026.

Registration: to confirm your participation by applying. Questions can be directed to Carolina Martinho (carolina.martinho [at] unitar.org (carolina[dot]martinho[at]unitar[dot]org)).