

AFRICA FORWARD SUMMIT 2026

BLUE ECONOMY WORKING SYNTHESIS NOTE

Senior Audience / HoSG Pack Version

EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT

- Purpose: provide a concise, senior-ready synthesis of the Blue Economy track for Africa Forward Summit 2026, aligned to the Nairobi Declaration package and the final roundtable architecture.
- Core proposition: move Africa from “sea blindness” to a value-creating, investment-driven and climate-aligned blue economy anchored in sovereignty, resilience and industrial transformation.
- Outputs: declaration-aligned political commitments, announcement-ready initiatives and financing signals, and a credible 2026-2030 delivery and follow-through architecture.

1. Session Identity, Leadership and Speakers

Field	Detail
Theme	Blue Economy
Session title	Unlocking the Potential of the Blue Economy
Summit	Africa Forward Summit 2026
Date	12 May 2026
Session format	High-level parallel roundtable
Indicative duration	60 minutes within the parallel roundtable block
Venue	Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), Nairobi

Leadership roster

Moderators

- H.E. Mr. Olivier Poivre d'Arvor — Ambassador for the Poles and Maritime Issues and Special Envoy of the President of the French Republic for the United Nations Ocean Conference
- Amb. Nancy Karigithu, CBS — Special Envoy on the Blue Economy, Executive Office of the President

Co-Chairs

- H.E President Bassirou Diomaye Faye; **Senegal**
- H.E President Dharam Gokhool; **Mauritius**

Speakers

- H.E. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu — President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- H.E. Dr. Patrick Herminie — President of the Republic of Seychelles
- H.E. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah — President of the Republic of Namibia
- H.E. Daniel Francisco Chapo — President of the Republic of Mozambique
- H.E. Dharambeer Gokhool — President of the Republic of Mauritius
- His Highness Prince Rahim Al-Hussaini — Aga Khan IV
- Hon Ali Hassan Joho – Cabinet Secretary, Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs of Kenya
- Anacláudia Rossbach — United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN-Habitat
- Sidi Ould Tah — President, African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala — Director-General, World Trade Organisation
- Aliko Dangote — President and CEO, Dangote Group
- Keith Svendsen — CEO, APM Terminals
- George Elombi — President, Afreximbank
- Sanda Ojiambo — Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Global Compact
- Ibukun Adewumi — Head, UNESCO/IOC Africa Secretariat

2. Strategic Proposition

The Blue Economy roundtable is framed as a political compact to move Africa from “sea blindness” to a value-creating, investment-driven and climate-aligned blue economy. It links sovereign stewardship of ocean and coastal assets with climate resilience, economic transformation, innovation and livelihoods, within an African-led, development-oriented cooperation architecture.

The session is designed to produce concrete, time-bound commitments that strengthen the Nairobi Declaration on Sustainable Ocean Partnership and Blue Growth, surface announcement-ready initiatives, and establish a credible implementation pathway for 2026-2030.

3. Why It Matters Now

13m sq km Africa’s Exclusive Economic Zones	30,500 km African coastline	US\$300bn → US\$405bn Blue economy revenues (2018 → 2030 projection)
49m → 57m Jobs supported (2018 → 2030 projection)	5% Estimated share of value currently created on the continent	€43.3bn / 524,000+ France maritime value added / jobs

Africa’s Blue Economy opportunity remains under-realised because of financing and investment constraints, weak value addition, maritime and port infrastructure gaps, capacity and technology deficits, and limited participation in higher-value maritime services. The challenge is compounded by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and other illicit maritime activities, rising climate and biodiversity pressures, workforce constraints (including sea-time pathways and seafarer mobility), and accelerating decarbonisation demands facing global shipping and port systems.

Against this backdrop, the Summit can connect continental frameworks, including the Africa Blue Economy Strategy, AIMS 2050, Agenda 2063 and the Lomé Charter, with France’s maritime science, digitalisation, governance and decarbonisation strengths, translating political ambition into bankable and deliverable outcomes.

4. Alignment to the Summit Message House

Sovereignty through systems and capacity Maritime governance, maritime domain awareness, ocean science,	Co-investment and shared value creation Reciprocity, co-investment, corridor resilience, blue jobs, innovation and	Delivery through bankable initiatives and implementation architecture
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digital systems, seafarer mobility and African-led implementation arrangements.

greater African value capture from ocean and coastal assets.

Declaration-aligned commitments, announcement-ready initiatives, investable pipelines and a time-bound follow-through architecture for 2026-2030.

5. Discussion Architecture

The roundtable retains six strategic objectives — ocean science; maritime digitalisation and systems modernisation; sustainable fisheries and blue food systems; innovative blue finance; seafarer mobility and maritime skills; and the integration of maritime security with economic development, operationalized through eight pillars for action. For the live session, these are grouped into three integrated discussion blocks:

Block	Theme	Core focus	Intended output
Block 1	Inclusive ocean governance and resilient trade corridors	Maritime sovereignty, maritime governance, maritime domain awareness, strategic sea lanes, ocean science and maritime digital systems.	Political direction on governance, security, corridor resilience and African leadership in ocean governance.
Block 2	Industrial transformation, value retention and trade systems implementation	Fisheries value chains, blue jobs, labour mobility, skills, ports, corridors and onshore value capture.	Commitments on industrial policy, trade systems, labour mobility and practical measures for stronger African value capture.
Block 3	Blue finance, green ports and maritime decarbonisation	Blended finance, bankable maritime infrastructure, renewable maritime deployment, and low-/zero-emission shipping transition.	Financing signals, priority project pipeline and execution pathways through 2030.

6. Priority Outcomes

1. Political / Declaration Outcome

- A clear political signal in the Nairobi Declaration on Sustainable Ocean Partnership and Blue Growth, anchored in maritime sovereignty, climate resilience, economic transformation and inclusive prosperity.
- African-led, development-oriented cooperation aligned to ABES, AIMS 2050, Agenda 2063, UNCLOS and related implementation agreements including BBNJ.

2. Investment / Initiative Outcome

- A shortlist of announcement-ready initiatives: Ocean Science and Innovation Platform; Maritime Digital and Technology Acceleration Initiative; Blue Food and Sustainable Fisheries Compact; Blue Finance Facility (2026-2030); Seafarer Mobility and Green Shipping Partnership; Green Ports and Private Sector Alliance.
- Clear visibility of bankable projects, financing signals and delivery partners.

3. Delivery / Follow-through Outcome

- A practical 2026-2030 follow-through architecture with named owners, ministerial/technical follow-up, annual review and alignment to continental and global processes.
- Implementation signals linked to IMO Net Zero, PSMA and WTO Fisheries Subsidies implementation, Blue NDC ambition, blue carbon and coastal resilience.

7. Contribution to Summit Products

Draft declaration language proposed for consideration

- We commit to advancing an African-led, development-oriented Blue Economy partnership that strengthens maritime sovereignty, secures resilient trade corridors, and enables greater African value capture from ocean and coastal assets.
- We commit to mobilising at least €5 billion in Blue Economy investment by 2030, including for sustainable fisheries and blue food systems, maritime digital and technology systems, green ports, renewable maritime energy, and the transition to low- and zero-emission shipping.
- We commit to a time-bound implementation architecture for 2026-2030, with designated lead institutions, annual progress review, and alignment with Agenda 2063, AIMS 2050, BBNJ implementation, IMO Net Zero processes and Blue NDC ambition.

8. Session Design and Run of Play

Time	Segment	Lead / speakers	Strategic role	Expected output
0-4 min	Opening framing	H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye	Position the blue economy as a pillar of industrialisation, and sovereignty and	Clear political framing anchored in urgency and

			climate action, under coordinated AU-led policy harmonisation.	economic transformation.
5-17 min	Leaders' Dialogue — Round 1: Maritime Sovereignty & Ocean Governance	H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu; H.E. Dr. Patrick Herminie	Land commitments on maritime security, governance and regional coordination; link governance choices to bankable pipelines.	Commitments on maritime security, regulatory frameworks and regional coordination.
18-30 min	Leaders' Dialogue — Round 2: Industrial Transformation, Value Retention and Trade Systems Implementation	H.E. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah; H.E. Daniel Francisco Chapo	Surface industrial, trade, logistics and workforce measures that convert ocean resources into integrated value chains and sustained value retention.	Industrial policy commitments; value addition targets; labour mobility frameworks; trade and logistics commitments.
31-48 min	Private Sector and Institutional Response: Financing, Capital Alignment & Implementation	Prince Rahim Al-Hussaini; Anacláudia Rossbach; Sidi Ould Tah; Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; Aliko Dangote; Keith Svendsen; George Elombi; Sanda Ojiambo; Ibukun Adewumi	Mobilise capital, validate feasibility, and define execution pathways, incentives and delivery roles required for private sector participation.	Investment signals; priority project pipeline; blended finance instruments; risk mitigation measures.

49-51 min	Implementation signals / announcements	Orange Marine representative; Serge Ekue (BOAD); ENSM representative; Hon. Joho	Present ready-to-execute initiatives and operational platforms for immediate implementation.	Visibility of bankable projects and operational platforms.
52-55 min	Nairobi Declaration adoption	H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto; H.E. Emmanuel Macron	Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, with accountability signal and delivery framing.	Official adoption of Nairobi Declaration and implementation framework.
56-60 min	Closing remarks	H.E. Dharambeer Gokhool	Transition from commitments to execution; confirm follow-up platform and next steps.	Clear implementation signal on establishment of follow-up platform.

9. Stakeholders Required for Implementation

Implementation cluster	Organisations / actors	Indicative role after the summit
Political and ministerial follow-through	Joint Ministerial Blue Economy Taskforce; participating ministries in Kenya, France and other participating states	Carry political commitments into ministerial coordination and decisions.

Secretariat and coordination	Dedicated Secretariat; Technical Working Groups	Maintain implementation architecture, results framework and reporting cycle for 2026-2030.
Continental alignment and review	Agenda 2063 structures; Africa Blue Economy Strategy (ABES); AIMS 2050 frameworks	Ensure alignment with continental implementation frameworks and strategic review processes.
Financing and investment mobilisation	AfDB; AFD; BOAD; Blue Investment Facility (if launched)	Translate summit signals into blended finance, investment vehicles and project pipelines.
Programmatic and technical delivery	Orange Marine; ENSM partnerships;	Advance digitalisation, training, green ports, maritime systems modernisation and skills delivery.
Fisheries, governance and maritime security	Association of African Maritime Administrations; fisheries enforcement mechanisms; maritime domain awareness institutions	Carry forward fisheries enforcement, maritime governance and domain awareness commitments under African leadership.
Monitoring, communications and accountability	Annual implementation review meetings; dashboard of indicators; independent mid-term review in 2028; Joint AU-France communication strategy	Track progress, communicate results and maintain accountability for delivery.