



ADDRESS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY BOLA AHMED TINUBU, GCFR
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

REPRESENTED BY

**AMB. SOLA ENIKANOLAIYE,
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL OPENING CEREMONY
11TH EDITION OF THE OUR OCEAN CONFERENCE**

WEDNESDAY, 17 JUNE 2026

MOMBASA COUNTY, KENYA.

I bring you warm greeting from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu who had asked to represent him on this occasion and to present this statement.

2. On behalf of the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I extend warm appreciation to the Republic of Kenya, for hosting the 11th edition of Our Ocean Conference. I also wish to express my profound appreciation to President William Ruto of Kenya for having invited us to this important conference and for the excellent facilities put at our disposal.

3. This gathering reflects our shared determination to safeguard the oceans as a heritage for present and future generations.

4. Nigeria stands as a major maritime nation in Africa, with governance over extensive coastal waterways covering about 853 km and a vital stake in the Gulf of Guinea. Our Ocean resources are central to food security, trade, energy and the livelihoods of Nigerians. For Nigeria, the ocean is not only a source of prosperity but also a pillar of sovereignty, security and climate resistance. We recognize that the health of our oceans directly determines the stability and prosperity of our continent.

5. At the inception of my Administration in May of 2023, we decided to prioritize the Blue Economy by establishing a Federal Ministry dedicated to the Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs.

6. Nigeria reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the rules-based ocean governance. We call for stronger African collaboration, to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which undermines food security and economic stability. Nigeria continues to invest in maritime domain awareness and surveillance to safe guard its waters.

7. In this regard, we have launched a National Blue Economy Action Plan to harness fisheries, shipping, maritime tourism and renewable energy as drivers of inclusive growth. We pledge to create **five million new ocean-based jobs by 2035**, prioritizing youth and women, and to ensure that ocean industries uplift vulnerable coastal communities. We urge equitable financing and technology transfer to enable African coastal states to fully benefit from ocean-based industries. The immense marine resources need to be fully harnessed as a major contribution to the growth of our GDPs and by extension, national development.

8. Nigeria underscores the climate-ocean nexus, emphasizing adaptation for vulnerable coastal communities. We pledge to expand marine protected areas by 2030, restore 50% of degraded mangroves and champion a continental initiative to eliminate single-use plastics. Nigeria calls for global support to address marine pollution, which threatens ecosystems and the livelihoods.

9. Nigeria has demonstrated its leadership in the Yaoundé Architecture for Gulf of Guinea security. We will like to stress the need for joint patrols, intelligence sharing and regional frameworks, to secure African waters. Maritime security is inseparable from food security, trade facilitation and peacebuilding. Through the adoption of modern technology and enhanced naval capability, Nigeria has significantly reduced incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea thereby removing a major impediment to freedom of navigation and commercial shipping in the subregion.

10. Partnerships and Global Collaboration is very key and Nigeria welcomes partnerships with Kenya and other African coastal states, to advance ocean diplomacy. We encourage collaboration with development banks, the private sector and

civil society to mobilise sustainable financing. Nigeria emphasizes the importance of youth and women's participation in ocean governance, ensuring inclusivity in decision-making and the full exploration of opportunities for employment and job creation for these categories of our population.

11. In closing Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Nigeria has come to Mombasa with a very clear message: *our ocean is our common heritage and its future depends on the collective action we take today.* We stand ready to lead, to collaborate and to contribute to building a continent where maritime sovereignty is respected, security is guaranteed and prosperity is shared.

12. Together, let us ensure that the ocean remains a source of life, peace and opportunity for generations to come.

13. Long live Africa's unity and solidarity.

14. Long live our oceans.

15. Long live the relations between the Republic of Kenya and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

16. I thank you for your attention.