

Side event Title: [Guardians of the Oceans:Protecting Oceans, Preserving Life and Livelihoods](#)

Thematic focus; [SDG 14 \(Life Below Water\) & 17 \(partnerships for the goals\)](#)

Organisers; [Children and Youth Constituency for Sustainable Communities](#)

Partners;

Youth For Sustainable Energy

Description

Africa enjoys one of the longest coastlines in the world stretching over 26,000 kilometers. The coastline is highly diverse, featuring sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, mangroves, estuaries, and coral reefs. It is home to over 300 million people, many of whom rely on marine resources for their livelihoods, rich in biodiversity and plays a crucial role in global trade, tourism, and environmental sustainability.

As Africa continues to grapple with the challenges of sustainable development, the importance of **SDG 14: Life Below Water** cannot be overstated. Africa's oceans are facing mounting threats from overfishing, pollution, coastal degradation, and the impacts of climate change. The 11th Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) presents an essential opportunity to align regional strategies with global commitments to SDG 14, ensuring the protection and sustainable use of ocean resources. This side event will bring together key stakeholders, including Youth, NGOs, academia, and the private sector, to discuss collaborative actions for safeguarding Africa's marine ecosystems. It will explore practical solutions to strengthen the blue economy, promote sustainable fisheries, address marine pollution, and build resilience in coastal communities. Central to the discussion will be the role of community engagement, capacity-building, and cross-sector cooperation in fostering sustainable ocean management. By focusing on policy development, marine conservation, and sustainable practices, this event aims to inspire action and solidify partnerships across Africa's coastal stakeholders.

Ultimately, it seeks to underline the urgency of safeguarding marine biodiversity, enhancing sustainable livelihoods, and ensuring that the blue economy can thrive for future generations. Through actionable insights and strong commitments, the side event will contribute to achieving SDG 14 and advancing Africa's broader sustainable development agenda.

Africa's oceans are a source of vital resources that contribute to the continent's economic growth, environmental sustainability, and cultural heritage. By ensuring the sustainable use and protection of these marine ecosystems, Africa can harness the full potential of its surrounding oceans for the benefit of current and future generations.

Zipporah Njenga - Moderator

Speakers

Dempsey Mai; Project manager, Diani Turtle Watch

Ben Unyime ; SDGs Advocate Nigeria

Yasmine Chaoui; Environment reporter, Morocco

