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MARINE REGIONS FORUM 2023

Navigating ocean sustainability
in the Western Indian Ocean
and beyond

7th — 9th November 2023

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

CONFERENCE REPORT

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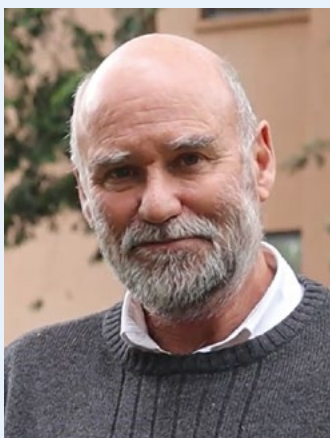
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1 FOREWORD

It was a great privilege for the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention to be invited by the Marine Regions Forum Consortium to assist with planning and hosting this important 2nd global Marine Regions Forum event in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). The United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles jointly hosted the Forum. Through this partnership with the Nairobi Convention and regional states it was possible to effectively engage with the ten Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure that the countries of the region were represented and participated fully in the Marine Regions Forum and were able to share best practices from the WIO with other marine regions and learn from experiences from other parts of the world. This interaction between regions was particularly important at a time when several new global ocean-related agreements and instruments were being developed or entering into force designed to improve ocean governance at both a global and regional level.

While all the themes covered during the three-day Forum were relevant to the work that countries of the WIO are undertaking to address the challenges and opportunities presented in the regional ocean space, the Regional Ocean Governance Strand was particularly pertinent to the ongoing efforts to develop an effective and implementable Ocean Governance Strategy for the WIO. The Marine Regions Forum provided the opportunity to delve into aspects of inclusivity, innovation and implementation of the draft strategy, and the discussions and feedback received have been very valuable in the process of finalising this important guiding document. The Nairobi Convention, and its host, the United Nations Environment Programme, look forward to the next Marine Regions Forum and are committed to supporting this ongoing collaboration between different regions of the world in working towards a more sustainable and productive future for our oceans.



TIM ANDREW

Senior Programme Manager
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The Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference brought together experts from various fields to address the pressing challenges facing the marine environment. This three-day event provided an excellent opportunity to explore solutions in a collaborative manner, to exchange knowledge and build partnerships. The deep commitment demonstrated by the participants and the organisers showed their dedication to the well-being of marine ecosystems.

The European Union has been a Marine Regions Forum supporter since the outset and is actively engaged in the Western Indian Ocean region through concrete projects, beyond the support given this conference. As highlighted by Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission, at the opening of the Marine Regions Forum 2023, as we celebrate the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement, it is crucial to embark on translating the agreed global objectives into concrete actions, recognising that the ocean is a global asset, and its management requires transboundary and transnational collaboration.

Looking into the future, we should keep the momentum created by the Marine Regions Forum as part of our efforts towards a sustainable future for our oceans. Amidst the numerous challenges facing us, the need for strong international cooperation is evident and clear.



Photo supplied by Raphaël Goulet

RAPHAËL GOULET

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Biodiverse, resilient, and well-functioning marine ecosystems, especially in coastal areas, are critical for providing goods and services that underpin human health and well-being. On a global level we have seen several positive achievements for ocean governance in the recent years, such as the adoption of the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework and the BBNJ Agreement. For the successful implementation of these global goals and agreements, and their translation into tangible actions and effects in the marine environment, regional cooperation is crucial. Sweden therefore is a supporter of the Marine Regions Forum, which offers a unique arena for open and inclusive dialogues among regional stakeholders to strengthen regional ocean governance.

Thanks to the participants, organizers and partners, the Marine Regions Forum 2023 was a success. Focusing on the Western Indian Ocean region, the conference spurred exchange of experiences and best practices among a wide array of experts, contributing to further advance ocean governance in the region. Much in line with the long-standing commitment of Sweden in the WIO-region, including support and cooperation with regional partners in the fields of marine science and Marine Spatial Planning.

This conference report summarizes valuable insights from the important discussions held among the participants. Hopefully it can also be used as an inspiration to a wider audience to catalyse action for a healthy ocean.



Photo supplied by Jenny Hedman

JENNY HEDMAN

Desk Officer
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2 WELCOME

As the Marine Regions Forum is grounded in a triple scale approach — supporting progress within marine regions, advancing dialogue among marine regions, and giving regional ocean governance a voice in global processes — it was time to make a step forward from the first conference held in 2019 in Berlin, Germany, from a global level exchange to where we believe change can be made to happen best: the regional level. And so, under the banner “*Navigating Ocean Sustainability in the Western Indian Ocean and Beyond*”, the Marine Regions Forum in 2023 held its second multi-stakeholder conference from 7-9 November 2023 in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania — and, for the first time with a dedication to a particular marine region, the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region.

The vast waters surrounding the island states and mainland coastlines of the WIO encompass areas rich in biodiversity and provide livelihoods to millions of people and opportunities for “blue” growth. It is a region where the ten countries working together under the Nairobi Convention are actively seeking to advance collaboration and practices for safeguarding and sustainably managing this unique ocean space. However, the region still faces significant challenges — the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, and marine pollution, and the challenges of aligning economic development and conservation, to name a few. The WIO region had been hit hard by recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme climate events, with impacts on its ocean-dependent economies and livelihoods, including effects on tourism that is one of the main economic pillars in the region.

Focussing on a selected set of these challenges and processes, the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference aimed to provide a space outside of formal settings for decision-makers and stakeholders from diverse sectors and backgrounds, from within the WIO region and other marine regions and organisations, to engage as experts — and leave their institutional hats off for open and inclusive exchange. It aimed to advance regional efforts to improve marine management and support the co-development of solutions that catalyse action towards the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean, supporting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) and other relevant policy processes such as the recently signed BBNJ Agreement.

Hosted by the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles, the Marine Regions Forum 2023 has shown that it is well positioned to be a platform for advancing regional efforts and collaboration, and for engaging with global processes. Almost 60% of the 183 participants came from the WIO region and included representatives and focal points of the Nairobi Convention’s member states. But the Marine Regions Forum 2023 also welcomed participants from other regional seas and marine regions — from Western Africa, the Caribbean, SE-Asia, the Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden, the Atlantic, the Baltic or the Mediterranean — allowing for knowledge sharing, and building of trust, networks, and collaborations across the seas.

Along four parallel topical strands and in seventeen workshop-style sessions, the Marine Regions Forum 2023 explored latest developments on the triple planetary crisis, exchanged on options for fostering a sustainable blue economy, informed about global ocean governance pro-

cesses such as in the field of deep-sea mining, and discussed how regional action can contribute to tackle the challenges and engage in processes. The practical matters of managing the WIO's ocean space and the development of a joint strategy for ocean governance in the WIO region was another major strand of work throughout the conference.

Daily themes guided the workshop sessions and daily plenaries — *Inclusivity* (day 1), *Innovation* (day 2) and *Implementation* (day 3), and invited keynote speakers and panellists from different sectors and marine regions to reflect on the conference topics and shared their views on how to achieve more inclusivity in ocean governance, accelerate progress and innovation, improve implementation of policies and strategies, and ultimately achieve the goals set. A side programme offered opportunities for exchange outside of sessions, with dinners by the sea, inspiring arts on display, and a Launchpad evening event for a moment of celebration of initiatives and activities of the WIO region.

This conference report attempts to distil the varied and complex discussions that occurred over the three days of the conference and share key messages from the Marine Regions Forum 2023. It has been prepared in collaboration with the coordinating team, the co-chairs of the sessions and the rapporteurs at the conference. The report can only provide a glimpse of the congenial atmosphere of the conference, and the willingness of participants to engage with new ideas and new people.

And it is thanks to the input from a deep engagement and consultation process undertaken before the conference, and to the contributions of all conference participants, that the Marine Regions Forum 2023 was able to achieve what it strived for. This joint effort allowed for bringing on board the manifold partners and contributors, point to the burning questions, and jointly define, develop, and organise the conference programme. This preparatory process has proven an indispensable element for making the conference meaningful and impactful for the WIO region — and beyond.

On behalf of the Marine Regions Forum consortium, we would like to thank everyone who put their hands on deck for the Marine Regions Forum 2023 — Asante Sana!



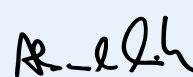
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Scenes from the start of the Marine Regions Forum 2023

3 KEY MESSAGES

Introduction

The Marine Regions Forum 2023 was held under the headline “*Navigating Ocean Sustainability in the Western Indian Ocean and Beyond*”, placing a focus on the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region and its challenges, and featuring many of the region’s ocean actors and experts. It provided an opportunity to reconnect in-person after the COVID-19 pandemic in a biodiversity-rich area that is particularly vulnerable to climate change, food insecurity and where a large proportion of the population is reliant on the coast for their livelihoods. But the WIO region is also pioneering a regional ocean governance strategy and is a hub of research, capacity development and science-to-policy engagement.

This conference provided a platform to share best practices from the WIO region with other marine regions and learn from experiences from other parts of the world. Further, the conference offered a space for on-going processes to receive input from stakeholders and advance work, such as for the regional ocean governance strategy for the WIO that is being developed through an extensive collaborative process and under the auspices of the Nairobi Convention Secretariat. And, at a time where it can feel like international relationships are breaking down, and nations are looking inwards more than out, it was encouraging to gather over 180 people in Dar es Salaam and be hosted by both the United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Seychelles to look at ways to work together towards a common goal of improved ocean governance at national, regional, and global levels.

The conference programme of the Marine Regions Forum 2023 was developed together with partners from the WIO region and experts engaging in the region and built on a yearlong process of engagement and consultation. The coordinating team facilitated the overall co-design and co-delivery of the Marine Regions Forum conference. The shaping of the programme, fine-tuning of content, the selection of speakers and other contributors, and the moderation of sessions and discussions at the conference were a collaborative effort of the team, its partners, and the co-chairs of topical strands and sessions. This is reflected in the key messages of the Marine Regions Forum 2023 which have been compiled by the coordinating team from summary notes of plenaries and workshop sessions and developed jointly with the co-chairs. Although the four topical strands dealt with a broad range of issues, there were commonalities that spread across the discussions. These are summarised below as key messages that emerged and stood out from the three days of the conference.

Key messages from the Marine Regions Forum 2023

(1) FOSTER INCLUSIVITY FOR TACKLING THE OCEAN'S CRISES.

The ocean is one ocean, and many of the marine challenges we are facing, including the triple planetary crisis, can only be solved through a united front, and regional or global collaboration. *Knowledge-based decision making* is required to tackle large and complex challenges the ocean and people are facing, and a *precautionary approach* should be adopted until adequate information and policy is in place, to make responsible, fair, and equitable decisions.

Collaboration is key to addressing transboundary and global challenges, and for implementing global goals at the regional level. Collaboration is particularly key in a context of limited human and financial resources for effective implementation, both in research and in policy and decision-making. A co-creation process is crucial, and successful collaboration requires that role assignments and responsibilities are clearly defined. There is a need to recognise that not all actors, including local communities or private sector entities, have the same concerns or priorities, but a common understanding of expectations and clear communication can increase buy-in and improve collaboration efforts.

Tackling the challenges also requires establishing *enabling conditions for effective implementation of policies* such as community involvement, or the use of the latest technology and methods for supporting knowledge-based decision making. Technological or methodological innovations are demanded to advance policy implementation. Clear *indicators* of effects and impacts are needed to measure the success of strategies and plans and determine action, such as upscaling of measures where positive impacts were achieved, or as incentive to motivate for resources. *Inclusivity* is key enabler for effective implementation of policies and goals. It is indispensable to include diverse voices in research, policy development and decision-making — from design to dissemination — and incorporate diverse forms of knowledge and understanding in the process. This includes women, youth, coastal communities, and the private sector.

However, it is not sufficient to just include these voices, it is equally important to recognise that different sectors and stakeholders have different perspectives and understandings of the issues being explored. *Safe spaces* and discussions based on *trust and openness* are needed, and sectors need to be empowered to contribute to discussions and decision making. There is value in an integrated approach, with collaboration between communities, businesses, and conservationists. A *participatory process* is important when developing e.g., ocean governance strategies, to ensure credibility, ownership, and contextual relevance. When engaging in multi-stakeholder processes, patience and time is an important factor, and collaboration methodologies, the type of engagement processes, and trusting relationships matter.

(2) MOBILISE RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES FOR A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGED OCEAN.

Innovations in financing mechanisms are required for achieving a healthy and sustainably managed ocean. Challenges in blue finance include creating an enabling policy environment, community involvement, enhancing the role of commercial banks, and addressing sustainability and project impacts. Blending financing, ensuring ownership, and building capacity are also hurdles. Solutions involve engaging with financial facilities like the African Bank and the World Bank to support ocean conservation through *investable programmes*, which is not yet successfully adapted for smaller scale initiatives. A *blue taxonomy* can highlight where funding should be going. It can provide a structure to prioritise and guide sustainable investments (green taxonomy applied to the ocean).

It is recognised that large organisations have a different kind of access to funds because of their capacity to e.g., write proposals. It would *increase inclusivity* if such funding came with a requirement to include local or grassroots organisations, amongst others. Developing *specialised funding streams* catered to different types of actors could also support inclusivity and enhance diversity in processes. It is recommended to use *bottom-up and co-creative approaches* to incorporate multi-stakeholder perspectives in a project's design phase, to test approaches (proto-typing), and allow for changes according to feedback received from stakeholders.

Capacity development is required for community level governance to be effective, but communities also need to be *empowered* to be involved in both planning and implementation of ocean management measures. For example, a growing number of ecosystem restoration initiatives are currently underway in the WIO, and engaging local communities early in restoration efforts ensures community ownership, with special attention to gender considerations. Capacity development is also required to interact more effectively with the private sector including a better understanding of *entrepreneurial and investment opportunities* particularly for micro, small and medium enterprises. *Better understanding of private sector frameworks is required*, including environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting, International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The private sector can play a crucial role in advancing e.g., the tourism blue value chain, in supporting community empowerment, engaging in carbon dialogue, financing programs for protecting critical habitats, and contributing to innovative technologies for monitoring and surveillance. There are *innovative economic opportunities* that should be explored to access carbon credits, ecosystem restoration, waste-to-value treatment plants, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) co-management with revenue streams, and plastic waste recycling.

(3) ADVANCE INNOVATIONS FOR CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE RESOURCES.

Latest *innovations from diverse sectors* might have a decisive role in ocean management. Sectors should make the most of *new and emerging technology*, including artificial intelligence and machine learning. Novel technologies and methods can also make the field interesting and attractive to the youth. New methods should be explored to disseminate information to policy makers and the public. Innovative technology should be employed together with capacity development.

Innovations in *future scenario planning* and *high-resolution modelling* should inform decision making and governance. These can contribute to the understanding of species distributions considering climate change impacts or how to respond to climate change impacts on coastal ecosystems. For example, fisheries management, including enforcement, can benefit from the latest technology and models to combat illegal fishing, and from employing adaptive strategies such as area-based management. But such new models and information sources also need to be synthesised into information that is practical and can be incorporated into decision making and ocean literature.

Metrics and frameworks that *measure return on investment* against clear indicators need to be established and used effectively. For example, monitoring carbon, particularly through community-led blue carbon projects, provides a tangible metric for valuing and addressing the restoration or degradation of marine ecosystems. As valuing the ocean is inherently complex, emphasis on *integrating diverse approaches to valuing the ocean*, recognising the need to account for changes and prioritise relative values over absolute metrics is needed. Innovative metrics that show impact and benefits are crucial to make visible the links to the investment made. *Ocean accounts* can help standardise such reporting and tracking of impact.

Regional collaboration efforts will be enhanced if *sharing of information, lessons learned, and regional initiatives* can be accessible on a *regional platform, for example*. Networks for coordination of proposals and initiatives, including Marine Spatial Planning initiatives and MPA networks,

and dedicated science-to-policy platforms can avoid duplication of efforts, support collaboration efforts, enhance information sharing and improve communication among stakeholders. *Implementation and monitoring plans* to measure progress of regional ocean governance strategies and other regional and international instruments are helpful to ensure that all areas are implemented with clearly defined targets and indicators.

The *Nairobi Convention's Information Management Strategy* is an example of an innovative solution. It is a framework for an information system, not a data system, meaning that no raw data will be added, and it should provide information that is useful and accessible for effective decision making. It would contribute to informing the Regional Ocean Governance Strategy of the WIO by addressing the evolving dynamics of the human-ocean nexus. Information Management Strategies like this can help enhance the role of the ocean governance strategies in decision-making and can identify key areas of missing information and track progress through shared information.

(4) TACKLING THE TRIPLE PLANETARY CRISIS — COLLABORATION IS KEY.

Certain challenges, such as climate change and plastic pollution, can only be tackled through a *collaborative approach*, bringing together a diversity of stakeholders and actors for joint action. In the case of plastic, it requires the inclusion of the plastic industry, besides policy, society, and other private industry.

It must also be acknowledged that despite being a minor producer of plastic waste or carbon emissions, regions like the WIO are susceptible to the impacts of these, and in some cases disproportionately affected. The complexity and diversity of the situation calls for strengthened *regional cooperation* as well as *country-specific interventions*, such as through regional policy, improved national legislation, community actions, and a global shift towards a circular economy.

(5) FOSTER A SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY.

The ocean is also a source of opportunities, particularly in the WIO region where the blue economy is looked to as a source of economic growth. This comes with the need for *inclusive, equitable access*, and *enabling policy* and *legislative frameworks* in addition to *knowledge-based decision making* for a sustainable blue economy. Collaboration was identified as a key factor in accessing financial resources, sharing experience, prioritising, and upscaling actions, and to increase visibility of successful initiatives.

But there also needs to be political will to develop a sustainable blue economy and create *enabling legislation and policy framework* to remove barriers to investment. This could include supporting entrepreneurship including the support of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), introducing tax incentives, and involving savings and credit cooperative organisations and climate trust funds, promoting a blue/green transition, and supporting public private partnerships. Approaches could further include tailored grants and soft loans tailored to meet MSME's specific needs, establishing credit lines for MSMEs, including the implementation of microcredit initiatives, and involving Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs) and Climate Trust Funds (CTF). Blended finance mechanisms are recognised as strategic to drive inclusive sustainable blue economy solutions forward. Further recommendations for advancing the blue economy included tax reforms, financial support for reporting standards (ESG, IFRS, ISSB) and investments in waste collection and infrastructure.

Innovative metrics and models need to be used to assess the value of the ocean, including non-market values. Assessing the WIO's role in the blue economy calls for a shift from traditional GDP-centred models to new ocean wealth models, considering externalities, sustainability, and non-market values.

(6) MAKE THE MOST OF GLOBAL GOALS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL.

Global discussions, treaties and agreements can generate positive change for sustainable ocean management — and catalyse regional and national action. For example, the recently signed *BBNJ Agreement*, developed under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), is a positive development for biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction. And it is extremely important for the health of coastal waters and resources, including of the WIO states, that are connected to the high seas' ecosystems. The future plastics treaty that is currently negotiated as international legally binding agreement to combat plastic pollution can also be an effective tool — if it compels states to act while addressing equity issues and considering the needs of African countries.

Regional consensus and ownership, along with country participation, are enabling factors for mainstreaming global policy processes into national planning processes. International and regional agreements are a way to *spearhead strategic action* and incorporate considerations for equitable solutions. *Capacity development* is required for national and regional bodies to effectively implement global treaties and decisions.

The effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement will require a *strong coordination between and among global and regional organisations*, and interregional collaboration will be crucial to identify best practices, foster partnerships, build capacity, and monitor progress. This will be true for the possible future plastics treaty too.

It should be recognised that international discussions and debates are not accessible to all levels of society or all stakeholders in ocean governance. For example, discussions at the *International Seabed Authority* cover a wide range of particularly complex issues (mining code, periodic review, 2-year rule), not all of which are understood by society at large, and a debate is needed on the possible impacts of deep seabed mining and the true benefits to society. *Transparency of discussions held in global fora* is indispensable and records of these should be available for all interested parties.

(7) CATALYSE IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL — IN THE WIO AND BEYOND.

It is important to *align action with regional and continental visions*, such as the African Union's vision for a prosperous blue economy, to maximise both impact and potential for regional collaboration or regional data sharing. Effective implementation requires *clear mandates* across different agencies that remain consistent and cohesive. This needs to be supported by *political will, capacity building and financial support* to fulfil mandates. Building on existing frameworks and knowledge can help accelerate progress. To be truly effective, policies and plans need to take a *long-term vision* approach.

The *Marine Regions Forum* as an informal platform and forum for open exchange, networking and fostering of collaboration is an opportunity to catalyse regional action. However, it is crucial to go beyond discussions and prioritising solutions and focus on how interventions are implemented.

A *regional ocean governance strategy* (ROGS) such as the one currently developed by the Nairobi Convention is an innovative approach to enhancing regional ocean governance initiatives. It must be recognised as a continuous process that can include different methods of cooperation such as various sorts of task forces and working groups. It should not be seen as an instruction manual, but a facilitating document that provides a framework for discussion, collaboration, and joint implementation. It can guide stakeholders at intersections among sectors at the subregional and national level and should complement existing frameworks and strategies in the region. However, its development requires financial and technical resources as well as finding common areas of agreement, as the ocean is a shared resource. The Nairobi Convention's member states

need to be involved in developing the strategy's contents and implementation. And as regional economic communities and Indian Ocean Commission are keen to play a role in the implementation of the ROGS, secretariats of regional bodies like these should be mobilised to access funding and capacity to support the countries.

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Group photo of participants at the Marine Regions Forum 2023

4 SUMMARY NOTES

The following section summaries the contributions and discussions made at the plenary and workshop sessions of the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference. The summary notes were compiled by the coordinating team together with the co-chairs and rapporteurs of the sessions. Names of co-chairs, invited speakers, presenters and panel discussant are indicated where they were part of the official programme, while the content of discussions is reported without identifying contributors.

Plenary sessions

WELCOME TO THE MARINE REGIONS FORUM

Senior Environmental Officer in the Vice President's Office of the United Republic of Tanzania, **Thomas Chali**, welcomed dignitaries and participants to Tanzania for the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference.

Barbara Neumann, co-lead of the Marine Regions Forum consortium and of the project team from the Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS), welcomed participants to this second conference. The first conference was held in Berlin, Germany, in 2019. It explored how regional approaches in ocean governance allow us to go closer, further, and faster for achieving a sustainable ocean, the lifeline that connects all people across the globe. The Marine Regions Forum builds on commitments made by the Government of Germany and the European Union in 2017 to establish a multi-stakeholder platform on ocean governance for exchange and joint learning. She highlighted that while regional ocean governance has its challenges, by gathering in this common space, we can share expert knowledge and catalyse action. The hope is that the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference will provide an opportunity for stakeholders from the WIO, and from other marine regions and organisations, to transform the ways we engage with the ocean, for joining forces, and to complement on-going policy processes. She thanked the conference hosts, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Seychelles, and the partners and funders, and encouraged participants to take off their institutional hats and engage with each other as experts in the conference.

The Nairobi Convention Secretariat's Executive Secretary, **Dixon Waruinge**, thanked the hosts, funders, and contracting parties of the Convention for being supportive of the conference. He reflected on his experience during the 2019 conference and how it provided clear recommendations and catalysed action in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specifically SDG14. COVID-19 had devastating impacts, including to coastal communities, and highlighted the importance of bridging the gap between knowledge, and policy. Dixon Waruinge emphasized how unique this conference is in its collaborative approach and being out of the formal intergovernmental space. He highlighted that the aim is to encourage stakeholders to engage, and that the focus should be on innovative solutions that catalyse action for the conser-

vation and sustainable use of ocean spaces and resources within and beyond national jurisdiction. He expressed his hope that by the 9th of November, all participants should be energised to develop long-term solutions for the WIO and for generations to come.

Emilio Rosetti, from the EU Delegation to Tanzania, presented on behalf of Charlotta-Ozaki Macias, Ambassador of Sweden, and reiterated that Sweden stands fully committed to the Marine Regions Forum and a successful WIO. He highlighted the importance of sustainably managing our common ocean and that there have been successes internationally, including the Global Biodiversity Framework, the BBNJ Agreement and fisheries subsidies agreement in the World Trade Organisation, as well as ongoing process towards an international agreement on plastics. For these international instruments to be successful, regional ocean governance is important. Sweden has supported marine science development in the WIO to develop ocean capacity and strengthen the knowledge base. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) has been a priority for Sweden in the WIO as a tool for sustainable ocean governance. Sweden has also been working with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat to support capacity development in MSP.

The Director-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission's, **Charlina Vitcheva**, highlighted the importance of cooperation, particularly in times of conflict and turmoil. Sustainable development is an important part of the EU's internal and international work, and the ocean is of particular importance to the EU. She emphasised the need for a deeper understanding of this environment that covers two-thirds of the planet and is both under threat from human activities and critical to human livelihoods and well-being. Barriers to cooperation need to be removed, particularly since the ocean is a global asset and its management requires transboundary and transnational collaboration. Charlina Vitcheva explained that the EU has an International Ocean Governance agenda which was designed with wide stakeholder consultation to identify the challenges facing the ocean.

Charlina Vitcheva pointed to climate change as one of the key challenges, particularly in the WIO where warming is occurring faster than the global average, and which needs to be addressed through mitigation and adaptation. She argued that the ocean needs to be part of the climate change discussions. Biodiversity loss is also a challenge facing the ocean disproportionately — where the rate of extinction is twice that of species on land. Ocean protection cannot wait, and the EU welcomed the biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction Agreement as a victory for multinationalism while acknowledging that the challenge is now in ratification and implementation thereof.

Further, Charlina Vitcheva reiterated the need for pragmatic regional solutions and that the EU supports regional work through regional seas programmes and regional fisheries management organisations and has been a support of the Marine Regions Forum since its onset. The EU considers this region-specific conference a milestone. And the EU is introducing a dedicated 58 million Euro programme for the WIO in 2024 and is actively involved in events in the region including with private actors and entrepreneurs and national programmes such as a 100 million Euro programme for a blue economy project with Tanzania. The EU and its member states will work together to implement the global gateway to provide smart ocean investment.

The Republic of Seychelles, one of the co-hosts of the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference, was represented during the welcome session by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, **Dennis Matatiken**. He reiterated that the ocean transcends borders, and that the waves carry with them shared burdens. Although individual countries are doing their best, the challenges the ocean faces are so immense that to address them, a global perspective is needed. He identified maritime security, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and plastic pollution as major challenges that require regional cooperation to develop effective solutions. He encouraged the enforcing of regional ocean governance frameworks to strengthen collaboration and encourage investment, highlighting that together, we can make a difference.

Aboud Jumbe (Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar), highlighted the journey that the Marine Regions Forum has taken from Berlin to the WIO, tackling the challenges of ocean governance and furthering SDG14. The timing of the 2023 conference comes while Tanzania, especially Zanzibar, are still recovering from the global shocks of COVID-19. He sees the Marine Regions Forum as an opportunity to bring unity to governments and entities, and by hosting it in the WIO, it demonstrates that there is more that connects than tears apart. He encouraged the collective efforts towards a sustainable blue economy, encouraging everyone to come on board. He highlighted Tanzania as an example of blue growth and resilience and encouraged the continued local and global efforts to further common ocean policy, particularly in maintaining the health and integrity of the marine ecosystem while achieving blue economic goals. He expressed hope that the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference will identify long-term solutions for the ocean, challenging everyone with the acknowledgement that while a lot needs to be done, it is better to do it together.

Mary Ngelela Maganga (Permanent Secretary of Environment in the Vice President's Office, Tanzania) welcomed everyone to Tanzania and reminded them of the goal to discuss ocean governance issues and how to enhance collaboration at the regional level. She highlighted the importance of the marine environments, its diverse life, corals, and mangroves to Tanzania and described how, in 2021, Tanzania launched its National Environment Policy, followed by the 2022 Master Plan which incorporated the marine environment. Tanzania has developed Marine Spatial Planning guidelines and is currently developing a Marine Spatial Plan. The country focuses on conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment, including fisheries, mining, shipping, renewable energy, underwater cables, and offshore oil and gas. She expressed appreciation for the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, funders and organisers and declared that the Marine Regions Forum was officially open.



Barbara Neumann, Research Institute for Sustainability

Empower Limited



Emilio Rosetti, EU Delegation to Tanzania

Empower Limited



Welcome panel

Empower Limited



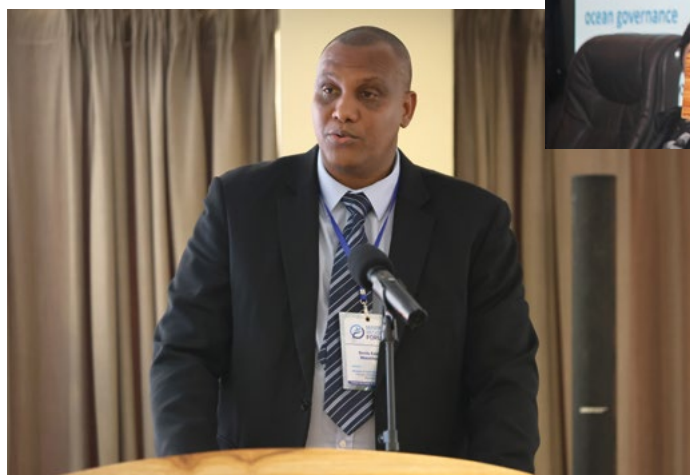
Charlina Vitcheva, European Commission

Empower Limited



Mary Ngelela Maganga, Vice President's Office, Tanzania

Empower Limited



Denis Matatiken, Ministry of Environment, Seychelles.

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MODERATION	Thomas Chali , Vice Presidents Office, Tanzania
SPEAKERS	Barbara Neumann , Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS
	Dixon Waruinge , Nairobi Convention Secretariat
	Emilio Rosetti , EU Delegation to Tanzania
	Charlina Vitcheva , European Commission
	Denis Matatiken , Ministry of Environment, Seychelles
	Aboud Jumbe , Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar
	Mary Ngelela Maganga , Vice President's Office, Tanzania
RAPPORTEUR	Pradeep Singh , Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS

PLENARY 1: BUILDING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Miranda Naiman (Empower Limited), who moderated this first plenary session of the Marine Regions Forum 2023, explained that the conference included four topical strands, and that the keynote speakers would provide a brief introduction to each of these.

David Obura (CORDIO East Africa) introduced the strand on the triple planetary crisis. The triple planetary crisis includes three primary threats: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. He highlighted how CORDIO East Africa is supporting coral reef monitoring to assess vulnerability, and that the results worryingly show reefs as either vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered because of climate change and overfishing. The distribution of marine species is changing because of climate change, and but there is nowhere for equatorial species to migrate to, thus the triple planetary crisis will be felt the most in equatorial regions. He warned that there are a lot of factors that worsen the threats to the ocean, and as we develop climate resilient pathways, we will need to make choices at each step of the way. We need to facilitate good choices that promote safe and just outcomes.

Aboud Jumbe (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar), in discussing the topical strand on fostering a sustainable blue economy, highlighted the importance of developing a Western Indian Ocean governance strategy, since ocean governance can only be achieved through cooperation and collaboration. This step can contribute to an African Ocean Governance Strategy — framing the science to policy nexus towards a sustainable blue economy. He encouraged the audience to address cross-cutting issues such as social inclusion, women empowerment, scientific advice, capacity building, public awareness and modern blue economy toolkits and indicators that include both formal and informal information. To achieve a sustainable blue economy, there needs to be policy in place, with data for evidence-based decision making, and the acknowledged responsibility to inform society of risks and opportunities. The region should work together to address gaps, maximise gains, value addition, and inclusivity. This includes increasing awareness, investing in partnerships, including with the private sector, and supporting communities and integration of market access for sustainable products. Scientific and political dialogue is important to reverse marine pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change and mainstream innovation in the sustainable blue economic approach.

Minna Epps (International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN), in exploring the strand on the implementation of global goals at regional level, highlighted the complexity of the tasks ahead in restoring ocean health. Multilateralism is needed for global problems, and the BBNJ Agreement is an excellent example and milestone, but with multilateral agreements and targets, regional and local implementation are crucial. The BBNJ Agreement is there to strengthen existing mechanisms to protect and conserve marine biodiversity and provide a unique platform for collaboration to tackle an issue that is beyond the capacity of any one country to address alone. Minna Epps congratulated the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic Seychelles on signing the BBNJ Agreement, but acknowledged that now ratification, implementation and capacity building is needed, and that she sees the WIO as a potential leader in this. The high seas are connected to the coast, and we need to look at how our regional mechanisms and institutions can collaborate to identify knowledge gaps and financial needs. The IUCN is partnering with artificial intelligence (AI) technology firms for monitoring and surveillance. The Great Blue Wall is another excellent example of a regional initiative. As we reflect on the BBNJ Agreement, we can see how to use this momentum in the negotiations for a plastic treaty.

Dixon Waruinge (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) introduced the Regional Ocean Governance strategy. He reflected on the length of time it took to develop the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and that the process can be as important as the product. Ocean governance includes appreciating natural capital value, maintaining that value, and delivering on the value proposition. It is also about developing partnerships to solve threats to marine and coastal ecosystems and mitigating the impacts of climate change. He highlighted the importance of breaking down silos and promoting collaboration — including developing a framework for dialogues

across different ministries and entities. This goes beyond Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Marine Spatial Planning but includes developing ecosystem restoration guidelines and a toolkit for sustainable port development. Ocean governance is about science and policy dialogues, and developing a regional ocean governance strategy is not an once off activity but rather part of a process.



David Obura, CORDIO East Africa



Aboud Jumbe, Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar



Minna Epps, IUCN



Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat



Keynote Speakers: Building a shared understanding

MODERATION	Miranda Naiman , Empower Limited
SPEAKERS	David Obura , CORDIO East Africa
	Aboud Jumbe , Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar
	Minna Epps , International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
	Dixon waruinge , Nairobi Convention Secretariat
RAPPORTEUR	Pradeep Singh , Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS

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First day of the Marine Regions Forum 2023.

Empower Limited



PLENARY 2: INCLUSIVITY AND INNOVATION IN OCEAN GOVERNANCE

This plenary which took place on the second day of the conference explored through a panel discussion questions on inclusivity and innovation in ocean governance. The panellists were introduced by moderator **Miranda Naimann** (Empower Limited) who asked them to first reflect on their main take-aways of the conference so far.

Lorna Inniss (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions, IOCARIBE) stated that, despite coming from different regions, we are facing similar issues in our single ocean, and one of the issues is how to do pragmatic science and communicate that science effectively with society and the private sector. The Marine Regions Forum is an opportunity to learn from each other. **Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy** (IUCN) highlighted her passion for small scale fisheries and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) and acknowledging the importance of communities to the future of the ocean, despite their current marginalisation and isolation. The voices of communities need to be included in discussions and find ways to value their traditional knowledge and incorporate it in policies that benefit the communities. **Samantha Petersen** (WWF) was pleased that the topic of inclusivity was part of the Marine Regions Forum 2023 and felt inspired by the stories of women in the blue economy and from the youth. She reiterated that diverse voices, including local communities, are needed in discussions and that we need to move beyond discussions to concrete actions. These actions need to include coastal communities who are the stewards and custodians of coastal resources. **Valerie Hickey** (World Bank) leads the World Bank's efforts in the blue economy in developing countries and encouraged the bridging of the gap between those who are doing work in coastal and marine environments and those making decisions about policy and funding, and the Marine Regions Forum 2023 is a part of this. **Jacqueline Uku** (Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, KMFRI) highlighted the importance of young voices and youth-driven activities in creating impact in ocean management. She urged the participants to make the most of opportunities such as the Marine Regions Forum, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, ocean literacy dialogues and Marine Spatial Planning discussions to include the youth so that they can pass their experiences on to others.

Jacqueline Uku was asked what inclusivity and innovation looks like to her and she highlighted an example of a community wanting to protect the mangroves in their areas. The World Bank supported them with financing, but what helped sustain their success was an enabling legal legislation, ongoing technical support, and being able to develop a governance structure that works for them rather than waiting for it to be developed by outsiders. Jacqueline Uku is also leading the Marine Spatial Planning process in Kenya and noted that the contribution of women to fisheries is not always quantified, and that it is important to ensure they are recognised and that there are governance structures and legislation that can protect them and their spaces.

Miranda Naiman picked up on **Valerie Hickey's** comment on funding and asked what can be done to engage with those doing groundwork in coastal regions. Valerie Hickey reminded us that micro and small businesses are still businesses and need to have autonomy over their own decisions. We need to recognise that decisions in the ocean involves trade-offs and blue economy decisions need to be just. Financing needs to include both public and private funders. Private funders, including local banks and local capital markets, need to be involved in the discussions, and proposals need to have a business model and plan. We need to include sizeable plans that are clear for banks to understand and fit into their understanding of business models with the potential to be profitable. Marine Spatial Planning could potentially help build these relationships and bring in banks to the planning.

Samantha Petersen was asked how we can effectively include coastal communities to which she responded that governments don't always have the capacity to manage communities, particularly in remote areas. And these communities are particularly vulnerable to poverty and their voices need to be heard because we cannot expect these communities to manage coastal resources for the broader community. We need to create networks of communities and an enabling environment for

communities to engage with policy makers, and finance options. This is where financing is needed the most, but mechanisms are needed to link communities to finance options.

This linked to **Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy's** response on how to include small scale fishers. Fishers are not necessarily motivated by marine conservation given that they need to focus on basic human needs, food security and financing. She recommended that the marine science and policy making community invests in local communities, to implement projects but also support education for their children and initiatives that would motivate and support communities instead of being reliant on NGOs and short-term funding. Work is needed in blue entrepreneurship and linking innovators and investors. A network can also help link local communities to carbon markets. Then we must ask how do we include knowledge holders in ocean governance?

Lorna Inniss highlighted that we need to have a legal basis for working at the grassroots level, and that it is also useful to have a regional mandate. In her experience, during intergovernmental meetings they can encourage member states to include those working in the field and the youth in working groups. She challenged the WIO to make sure that they incorporate the youth into the process of designing the questions and the direction of the science we do to be more relevant.

MODERATION	Miranda Naiman , Empower Limited
PANELLISTS	Samantha Petersen , World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF
	Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy , International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN
	Lorna Inniss , Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions, IOCARIBE
	Jacqueline Uku , Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, KMFRI
	Valerie Hickey , World Bank
RAPPORTEUR	Pradeep Singh , Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS



Jacqueline Uku, KMFRI



Samantha Petersen, WWF



Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy, IUCN

PLENARY 3: SHAPING THE PATH AHEAD

The concluding plenary panel, held under the headline “shaping the path ahead”, provided an opportunity for representatives from Africa to share their priorities and actions for the future of ocean governance and their perspectives on the deliberations that unfolded during the conference. This session was an opportunity to show how to take ocean governance forward in the future and provide a reflection on what is needed at regional and national levels to implement positive change. As the last session of the conference, it was also an opportunity to reflect of the three days.

Ella Naimann (Empower Limited) asked the panellists to start by sharing their key take-aways. **Dixon Waruinge** (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) noted the importance of technology and data for solutions and marine conservation, particularly in areas that are harder to access, such as in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ). **Kareen Andriantsiferana** (WWF and representing the early careers professionals at the conference), felt inspired by the expertise at the conference but urged senior professionals to also learn from the younger generation, particularly when it comes to technological advances. She also challenged the audience to review the assumptions we work with and to work together for positive change. **Dustan Shimbo** (Vice President’s Office, Tanzania) reflected on the importance of an enabling legal framework and ensuring that marine resources are available for the next generation. He highlighted the importance of the role of regional cooperation because we need the ocean, as it is, to sustain every boat that is along this ocean journey. **Denis Matatiken** (Ministry of Environment, Seychelles) reiterated the importance of working across silos and accessing new technologies. He highlighted that we should look beyond our own experiences, because someone might have solutions for challenges that are like what we are facing. By working together, we can go forward in the same direction. **Abdoulaye Diagana** (Abidjan Convention Secretariat) reminded us that even though we are facing a triple planetary crisis, we have an opportunity to make a big leap in terms of the human relationship with the environment. This will require a paradigm shift. We need to question what we want from economic development, as well as how we live with market-based models. He discussed the importance of including decision makers and the private sector in discussions and improve collaboration by looking at the barriers that make cooperation a challenge. Technical innovation and co-designed solutions can help us face the crisis, but we need to see how to introduce behavioural change in society and inspire each other and the next generation.

Ella Naimann asked the panellists what they would like to see happening in ocean governance going forward. **Kareen Andriantsiferana** called for inclusivity and creating spaces for people to speak and be heard. We need to talk to people outside of our usual circle but in a way that is inclusive and leads to concrete action. **Dixon Waruinge** agreed that ocean governance must be inclusive. It is also important to stop blaming different sectors or sections of society, but rather start managing the environment better and critically evaluating and influencing public spending. He spoke about the importance of generating knowledge and providing opportunities to process that knowledge and communicate it in a way that it can be understood. Integrated ocean governance needs to be collaborative, innovate and generate new tools, but we need to move beyond repeating the same discussions and find solutions. **Abdoulaye Diagana** reminded us to consider the impact of our activities on communities and to make sure that knowledge is accessible to all citizens. We need to consider our language in communicating science and that we incorporate traditional knowledge and create trusting relationships. We need to communicate that the ocean is impacted by our activities, e.g., the plastic bags we use at home. We will need a combination of technology is important, effective ocean literacy and working together to facilitate change. **Dustan Shimbo** built on this to acknowledge that decisions need to be made on who does what, when and with what financing. This can be complemented by regional processes and collaborations to source funding. **Denis Matatiken** urged the participants to act and talk about solutions. Communities need to be empowered. We need to innovate in how we approach challenges, for example, in the case of plastics and waste, we should work with industry and the tourism sector and work together to find solutions. This requires a foundation of trust and good communication. Given the limited resources available, we should be working together.

The discussion was opened to the floor with the following comments:

- One of the participants highlighted the importance of acknowledging that some issues require global collaboration (e.g., ballast water management).
- Another participant recognised that while there might be good ideas, there is not always enough funding to follow through or develop the resources required.
- It was mentioned that the role of ocean literacy was highlighted, at school level to encourage the youth to be interested in the ocean.
- Another contribution highlighted that it is also important to restore science in society. Communities are suspicious of science, and this is a mindset that needs to be adjusted.
- The final comment from the audience was reiterating the importance of bringing the youth in to the conversations, not just as activists but as experts.

Paubert Mahatante (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Madagascar), who was unfortunately not able to attend the conference, shared a recorded message with the participants of the Marine Regions Forum 2023. He highlighted that we need to address the problems of the triple planetary crisis and expressed Madagascar's enthusiasm for working with the region and taking action. He urged all scientists, non-state actors, as well as actors in fisheries to think about the future generation and establish an ocean governance policy on how we could manage and use the ocean resources. He hoped we would be using the discussions at the conference and collective work programmes to meet the SDGs and in particular SDG 14 and reminded everyone that this will not happen if we don't all work together.

In a closing speech, **Barbara Neumann** together with Shannon Hampton, from RIFS in Potsdam, Germany, concluded the 2023 Marine Regions Forum conference with a round of personal remarks and words of thanks. Barbara Neumann emphasised again the co-creative development process behind the Marine Regions Forum and reiterated the goals of the Marine Regions Forum of providing an informal platform for exchange and action within and between marine regions, and for building bridges between the regional and global level. While the first conference of the Marine Regions Forum in 2019 had more of a global focus, the 2023 edition in the WIO region set out to bring the Marine Regions Forum to the regional level, and to focus the discussions and exchange on topics and issues relevant for this region. She remarked that from her perspective, this second Marine Regions Forum was able to live up to its objectives. It provided a platform for the Nairobi Convention to advance their Regional Ocean Governance Strategy, and the contributions made in various sessions will be taken further and into the next Nairobi Convention's Conference of the Parties (COP). She expressed hopes that the importance of the Marine Regions Forum is demonstrated also by it bringing together over 183 participants from the WIO region and from other marine regions of the world, from different disciplines, backgrounds, initiatives, and organisations. She further shared a personal take away message — the importance of being inclusive, and of engaging with the youth to make change happen. She concluded by emphasising that the Marine Regions Forum in the WIO region also is a major milestone for the project team and consortium which strived to make it a co-creative effort, and that the team is very pleased with the outcome. Finally, she invited the participants to share their feedback and impressions through a survey sent out in the follow up, for the Marine Regions Forum consortium to take up — and hopefully take this journey forward together.

Finally, **Shannon Hampton** (RIFS) thanked the funders, hosts, partners, and support staff as well as the coordinating team of the Marine Regions Forum. She highlighted that the content of the conference has been developed in close collaboration with global and regional partners over months leading up to the conference. She thanked all the participants for their contribution and input into the discussions towards making the conference what it was.



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Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi
Convention Secretariat



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Dustin Shimbo, Vice President's Office, Tanzania



IISD/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou

Kareen Andriantsiferana, WWF



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Paubert Mahatante, Ministry of Blue
Economy and Fisheries, Madagascar

MODERATION	Ella Naiman , Empower Limited
PANELLISTS	Dustan Shimbo , Vice President's Office, Tanzania
	Denis Matatiken , Ministry of Environment, Seychelles
	Dixon Waruinge , Nairobi Convention Secretariat
	Abdoulaye Diagana , Abidjan Convention Secretariat
	Kareen Andriantsiferana , World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF
RAPPORTEUR	Pradeep Singh , Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS



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Discussions and note taking during the Marine Regions Forum 2023



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Topical strands and workshop sessions

Over the course of three days, the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference tackled pressing topics through four distinct thematic strands, each with a dedicated focus on inclusivity (day 1), innovation (day 2), and implementation (day 3).

The theme of **Inclusivity** on day 1 set the tone for exploring diverse perspectives, promoting equality, and fostering a welcoming environment for all participants. It encouraged dialogue on topics such as diversity, accessibility, and social justice, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive spaces. On day 2, the theme of **Innovation** fuelled exploration into ground-breaking ideas, technologies, and solutions. Participants were encouraged to share innovative projects and approaches that have the potential to drive transformation. Finally, day 3's theme of **Implementation** shifted the focus towards practical application and action. It encouraged participants to discuss strategies for turning ideas into action, overcoming challenges, and implementing initiatives. It aimed to prompt regional exchange on ensuring that the knowledge shared during the event translates into tangible outcomes and results.

Navigating ocean sustainability in the Western Indian Ocean and beyond

Tackling the triple planetary crisis	Addressing the triple planetary crisis in local contexts in East Africa
	Innovation to tackle the climate change-driven triple planetary crisis
	Towards GBF in the WIO and beyond: Achieving conservation outcomes at scale
	Coastal Adaptation in the WIO: from theory to practice
Fostering a sustainable blue economy	From science to policy and society: Co-designing sustainable blue economic development
	Innovation to tackle the climate change-driven triple planetary crisis
	Articulating marine spatial planning initiatives towards co-creation of regional visions
	Advancing private sector involvement in ocean sustainability and governance in the WIO
Implementing global goals at the regional level	Negotiations on deep-sea mining: Where does Africa stand?
	Fighting against plastic pollution: Progress and challenges in the WIO
	Future high seas MPAs: What role for the WIO intergovernmental institutions?
	Accelerating coastal and marine restoration in the WIO
Regional ocean governance	Inclusivity in regional ocean governance: From co-development to co-implementation
	Sharing the ROGS process with the WIO and beyond
	Information Management Strategy
	Who does what, when and how?
	Financing and Resourcing

Strand 1:

Tackling the triple planetary crisis

The triple planetary crisis is a terminology and framework adopted by the United Nations system to describe the three intersecting global environmental crises of: pollution; climate crisis; biodiversity loss and/or ecological crises. As interconnected environmental emergencies, these need to be addressed together. They impact ecosystems, human health, and the global economy while worsening inequalities. This strand examined equitable conservation, cutting-edge innovative solutions, and transformative actions needed to effectively address the crisis in the WIO region and beyond. The aim of this topical strand was to focus on the triple planetary crisis with some innovative thinking. The participants highlighted the importance of enabling conditions for implementation of policies; community involvement; the use of the latest technology and methods for knowledge-based decision making and to develop indicators to measure impact.

Session 1.1:

Addressing the triple planetary crisis in local coastal context in East Africa: Fostering resilient communities and ecosystems

INTRODUCTION

Human well-being and marine conservation are two sides of the same coin. There are trade-offs and synergies between policies addressing human well-being and the conservation of natural ecosystems. In the face of the triple planetary crisis at local scales, it becomes imperative to recognise these dependencies for the design of nature and people-positive interventions. The equitable access to and distribution of resources is essential for ensuring social justice and reducing vulnerabilities, particularly for marginalised communities who contribute the least to the three crises. Simultaneously, safeguarding species and ecosystem resilience is crucial for maintaining the planet's life-supporting systems. This session delved into local coastal contexts along the shorelines of WIO countries to explore innovative approaches, lessons learned, foster collaboration, and pave the way for transformative actions that promote a sustainable, resilient, and just future for all.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The session, chaired by **David Obura** (CORDIO East Africa) and **Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy** (IUCN) aimed to tackle the triple planetary crisis, with the goal to explore solutions within the East African context to foster resilient communities and ecosystems. Emphasising inclusivity, the session urged participants to consider the impact of these crises at the grassroots level, where vulnerability is most pronounced, particularly within the WIO region. The introductory keynotes set the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and potential solutions to these crises.

The session included four presentations that delved into different facets of the triple planetary crisis. **Mike Roberts** (Nelson Mandela University), in his presentation on climate change in the WIO, underscored the alarming rate of warming in the region, predicting a 5-degree Celsius increase by 2050 in the East African coastal area. The ecological ramifications of this warming include creating of ecological deserts, disrupting food chains, and adversely affecting community livelihoods. The vulnerability of local communities to climate impacts, such as cyclones, was highlighted, emphasising the urgent need for strategic conservation measures like MPAs to address future scenarios.

Jared Bosire (Nairobi Convention WIOSAP project) addressed the second planetary crisis — pollution. Despite the challenges posed by pollution, he conveyed a hopeful message by outlining

strides made in the region to understand and combat the issue. The establishment of the WIO regional action plan on marine litter in 2022 and the formation of a marine litter technical group signify coordinated efforts to combat pollution. The presentation underscored the multifaceted nature of pollution, spanning economic, public health, and political dimensions, transcending mere environmental concerns.

David Obura explored biodiversity loss because of climate change, fishing, and economic growth. Using indicators like hard coral, fleshy algae, parrotfish abundance, and grouper abundance, he presented a comprehensive assessment of ecosystem collapse. The global perspective depicted equatorial marine communities lacking in biodiversity, with no species replacement, magnifying the justice issue and emphasising the importance of local solutions. The session underscored the need to consider the impacts on people rather than focusing solely on the loss of biodiversity.

Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy's presentation shifted the focus to locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) in Madagascar as a potential solution. With over 280 LMMAs in the country representing 500,000 small-scale fishers, she highlighted their potential to engage communities in conservation efforts. Despite facing challenges, LMMAs have demonstrated improvements in conservation interest, resource management, and governance.

Discussions brought forward diverse perspectives. Participants expressed concerns about the need for MPAs in strategic locations for future adaptability, the overwhelming nature of the crises, and the necessity of understanding the system before implementing plans. The discussions highlighted the importance of considering local contexts and the imperative to empower action. In addressing regional governance, participants highlighted the need for translating regional initiatives into meaningful local and national change. Social disparities within the region were recognised, emphasising the importance of scaling interventions appropriately to address diverse needs. Furthermore, participants stressed three critical elements for consideration: *the future*, urging discussions to focus on future scenarios; *urgency*, emphasising the need for immediate action; and *acceleration*, highlighting the imperative to expedite efforts in all discussions. Opportunities for shared planning were explored, with discussions on the potential replication or upscaling of successful initiatives at the national level.

During the group work session, participants engaged in roundtable discussions to identify local solutions to the triple planetary crisis. The emphasis shifted away from identifying good-practice examples, as participants felt these depend very much on local context, towards enabling conditions for implementation: framing the narrative, governance, infrastructure, markets, motivating behaviour, sustainable financing mechanisms, return on investment, and integrating local communities' rights. Key actions identified that assist with providing the right enabling conditions include:

- Community needs assessment — to identify what is needed in each case.
- Mapping value chains — to identify specific opportunities and barriers.
- Climate vulnerability assessment — to identify climate mitigation and adaptation needs.

In concluding the session, the focus shifted to models illustrating the contributions of enabling factors, delivering solutions to secure community livelihoods. It was emphasised that enabling conditions are crucial for the effectiveness of nature-based solutions. The session underscored the need to go beyond prioritising solutions to address the conditions that would enhance the impact of interventions. Ultimately, the emphasis was on how to implement solutions, considering the local context and promoting the empowerment of communities to address the triple planetary crisis effectively.

CONCLUSION AND KEY MESSAGES

- The group discussions focused on enabling conditions for implementation, stressing the need to consider diverse local and national contexts, and emphasising how solutions are implemented. Urging discussions to concentrate on future scenarios for effective decision-making, the importance of understanding and addressing diverse local contexts was highlighted, along with stressing the significance of empowering (local) communities in planning and implementation.
- Enabling conditions (the how) were identified as crucial for the success of nature-based solutions, underlining the need to go beyond prioritising solutions, and instead focusing on how interventions are implemented. Recognising the challenges of managing large MPAs and the importance of connectivity, the discussions also highlighted the potential for upscaling strategies to address the triple planetary crisis effectively.

SESSION COORDINATOR	Laura Weiland Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS
CO-CHAIRS	David Obura CORDIO East Africa
	Vatosoa Rakotonirafy International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN
RAPPORTEURS	Laura Weiland Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS
	Deidre de Vos Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, WIOMSA

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Group discussions in workshop sessions.

Sessions 1.2 and 1.3: Innovation to tackle the climate change-driven triple planetary crisis

INTRODUCTION

The triple planetary crisis is exacting a heavy toll on individuals, communities, and economies and imperilling life on our planet. Although the scientific community has collectively sounded the alarm on the rapid degradation of planetary resources, manifest ecological overload, as well as the erosion of the ecological foundations of our economies, the international community is still not doing enough to mitigate these impacts either as individual or collective threats. The session comprehensively addressed critical environmental challenges in the WIO and proposed solutions to mitigate the impact of the triple planetary crisis. Presentations covered topics ranging from climate change urgency, ecosystem modelling, tuna fisheries sustainability, organised crime in WIO fisheries, blue economy assessment, plastics pollution, to pollution control and nature-based solutions.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Mike Roberts (Nelson Mandela University) presented on climate change in the WIO and addressed climate change urgency in the WIO, emphasising heightened Indian Ocean Dipole¹ events' frequency and strength, akin to El Niño. Marine heat waves, notably on Madagascar's west coast, are identified as a significant concern. High-resolution models, derived from emissions data, project the WIO's 2035 state, focusing on episodic pulses threatening coral ecosystems. Forecasts predict 10-12-month marine heat waves by 2035, impacting fisheries like tuna. Mike Roberts explored marine species migration challenges, introducing the WIO2100 Tactical initiative for future forecasting. The presentation stressed climate change's crucial role in MPA planning, recognising its complexity. Discussions delved into the need for more detailed, granular MPA models, incorporating local contexts, and exploring species' genetic adaptation to climate change.

Darcie Anderson (University of Cape Town) presented on new approaches for modelling the future of the WIO ecosystem, focussed on ecosystem modelling in the context of the United Nation's Ocean Decade goal. She emphasised the need for informed modelling with input from managers of MPAs, inviting collaborations from the audience. Ecosystem models use components relating to the bio-physical, ecological, and human use aspects of an ecosystem, which aid in understanding the impacts of fishing pressures and climate change on species and ecosystems. Some examples include *Atlantis* and *Ecopath with Ecosim*. As end-to-end ecosystem model, they can include bio-physical components of an ecosystem, species functional groups, fishing fleet dynamics, social and economic dynamics². The presentation underscored the significance of integrating data into ecosystem models to enhance predictions and guide management strategies. The presentation underlined that the accuracy of predictions is contingent on the quality of data input into these models. After the presentation, discussions questioned the public perception of climate change and proposed collaboration opportunities, highlighting the importance of engaging with stakeholders.

Francis Marsac (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement — IRD / French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development) presented the state of tuna fisheries in the WIO, differentiating between industrial and artisanal fishing methods and highlighted the main fishing gears used. Data from the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) showed a significant increase

[1] The **Indian Ocean Dipole** (IOD), also known as the Indian Niño, is an irregular oscillation of sea surface temperatures in which the Western Indian Ocean becomes alternately warmer and then colder than the eastern part of the ocean. It affects the climate of countries that surround the Indian Ocean Basin and is a significant contributor to rainfall variability in this region. (See: <https://www.worldclimateservice.com/2021/09/02/indian-ocean-dipole/>)

[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8415284/>

in tuna catch, mainly by purse seiners, raising concerns about overfishing. IOTC assessments revealed 45% of tuna in the Indian Ocean are overfished, while 56% (primarily skipjack tuna) remain healthy. Climate change is identified as impacting tuna fisheries, with a potential relocation of purse seine fleets by 2100, posing challenges for Seychelles. Pelagic long liners may be less affected due to their access to deeper, oxygenated habitats. The presentation underscored the vulnerability of specific shark and ray species and addressed the issue of drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), proposing measures such as limiting their number, removing those near ports, and exploring the polluter-pays principle to minimise environmental impact and costs.

Mitigating the impacts of the triple planetary crises on tuna fisheries involves a multifaceted approach. To address overfishing, measures include enforcing IOTC Monitoring and Control regulations, implementing stringent Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) procedures, controlling fishing capacity, combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing through advanced technology, and employing area-based management with 100% observer coverage. For the protection of wildlife, strategies focus on best handling and release practices, enforcing bycatch mitigation measures, and reducing the number of driftnets. Addressing climate change requires considering predictions through ocean-coupled ecosystem models, employing technology-based approaches, and implementing ecosystem-based adaptations. Lastly, in tackling marine pollution, the emphasis is on reducing the number of FADs, removing entangling drifting FADs, promoting biodegradability, and implementing the polluter-pays principle as a funding mechanism.

Hennie van As (Nelson Mandela University) asked during his presentation if we can break the criminal stranglehold in Africa. He addressed organised crime in WIO fisheries, challenging the perception of IUU fishing as only a regulatory issue. He argued that low penalties for IUU fishing fail to eliminate organised crime, including severe offenses like racketeering, fraud, corruption, money laundering, human and drug trafficking. Highlighting its association with human trafficking, drug smuggling, and illegal marine resource trade, Hennie van As cited instances of criminal syndicates smuggling poached abalone and rock lobster, notably a Chinese network in the South African illegal abalone trade. Corrupt networks led by kingpins facilitate illegal practices like vessel registration, allocation of fishing licenses, and port access. Illegally caught fish might enter the legitimate value chain unless detected before transshipment or landing. A curriculum for training judges in SADC countries, focusing on marine living resources, has been developed. The first step is the professionalisation of the sector, emphasising the need for skilled and trained personnel to navigate the complexities of fisheries management effectively. Improving inter-agency and cross-state cooperation was highlighted — collaboration is a fundamental aspect of successful governance. Advocacy emerged as another crucial element for change, suggesting the necessity of promoting awareness and understanding of sustainable fishing practices and their broader implications. Furthermore, he advocated for the decriminalisation of subsistence and small-scale harvesters and recognising the nuanced nature of their activities.

The presentation called for stronger international regulations, increased penalties, and improved monitoring to combat the criminal stranglehold on WIO fisheries. He suggested strategies like intelligence gathering, counterintelligence, and inter-agency collaboration. The discussion explored organised crime in artisanal fisheries, touching on dynamite fishing and the distinction between governance issues and criminal activities in IUU.

Ken Findlay (GOAP Africa Community of Practice / AfriSeas Solutions (Pty) Ltd.) presented on “*How blue is the WIO’s blue economy?*” and delved into assessing the WIO’s role in the blue economy. Recognising challenges in valuing subsistence fishing, Ken Findlay advocated for moving beyond traditional GDP-centred ocean valuation models. He introduced new ocean wealth models, considering externalities, sustainability, natural capital, inclusivity, equity, and non-market values. The presentation used numerical insights to highlight challenges in estimating the economic contribution of subsistence fishing, emphasising the difficulty in assigning monetary value to non-sales activities. Ken stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to ocean valuation beyond GDP-centric models.

Emphasising the link between ocean health and wealth, Ken Findlay proposed Sustainable Ocean Plans (SOPs) as crucial for evidence-based adaptive ocean governance. Referring to the 2020 commitment by the High-Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean Economy, Ken outlined SOPs' key attributes: inclusive, integrative, and iterative processes; content based on areas, ecosystems, and knowledge; and endorsed, financed, and capacity-enhanced implementation. SOPs, according to Ken Findlay, should cover spatial plans, economic development strategies, environmental protection, social considerations, ocean accounts, enabling policies, and financing.

Douw Steyn's (Plastics SA) presentation addressed the pervasive issue of plastic pollution in the WIO. He challenged the conventional narrative by claiming that the plastic industry is not the primary culprit; rather, saying it is human behaviour that drives plastic pollution. Douw Steyn advocated for collaboration between the WIO and the plastics industry, balancing bans on plastic use with economic considerations. An audience member noted that many private companies have been externalising their costs, resulting in e.g., governments paying for waste management, burning, or landfills, and by that essentially socialising the costs and privatising the profits. The audience also asked for more concrete ideas to combat marine litter, to which the reply was, that plastics companies are driven by their own economies, and that we need to think how and what we produce and what the commitment is for industry.

Steve Mwangi (Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute — KMFRI) shifted the focus to pollution control and nature-based solutions (NbS) in the WIO. He identified cross-sectoral drivers of pollution, with urban centres being the primary hotspots. Effective wastewater management is presented as a crucial component, requiring meaningful stakeholder engagement, knowledge and capacity building, policy frameworks, political commitment, and sound financial arrangements. The presentation introduced NbS, specifically constructed wetlands, as cost-effective and highly efficient mechanisms for wastewater treatment. A demonstration project around a prison landscape showcased the successful implementation of constructed wetlands to address wastewater issues from the building. The discussion session explores questions about the scalability of these solutions and clarifies the nature of NbS in the context of pollution control.

Minna Epps (IUCN) and **Ted Schmitt** (Allen Institute for AI, AI2) presented the Skylight project, emphasising translating data and artificial intelligence (AI) into actionable insights for high seas surveillance. Aligned with ocean sustainability goals, Skylight addresses IUU fishing. AI2's philanthropic tech services provide free accessibility. The project utilises satellite observations for real-time monitoring of larger fishing vessels, identifying potential illegal activities. Minna Epps highlighted the technology's value. The focus on the BBNJ Agreement, with currently 83 signatures, underscored its potential impact and the need for capacity building. Skylight's real-time data, with a 2-hour delay, is seen as a valuable tool compared to other tools that have a 3-day lag. Minna Epps stressed the need for capacity building, especially regarding equity in technology use for effective implementation, including training in data use. It was encouraged that if WIO states implemented an MPA, they can use this technology in the processes.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- To address climate change impacts, particularly heightened Dipole events and marine heat waves, the proposed strategies include the use of high-resolution models for future projections.
- In the realm of fisheries management, the focus should be on enforcing regulations, implementing advanced technology to combat illegal fishing, and employing adaptive strategies such as area-based management.
- Tackling organised crime in WIO fisheries necessitates professionalisation of the sector and improve cooperation between agencies and states, and advocacy for awareness of sustainable practices.
- Assessing the WIO's role in the blue economy calls for a shift from traditional GDP-centred models to new ocean wealth models, considering externalities, sustainability, and non-market values.

- Combating plastic pollution involves collaboration between the WIO and the plastics industry, emphasising behavioural changes and considering economic implications.
- Pollution control and NbS, such as constructed wetlands, are presented as effective measures, requiring stakeholder engagement and policy frameworks.
- The Skylight project, utilising AI, and satellite observations, addresses IUU fishing and highlights the importance of technology, collaboration, and capacity building.
- These diverse strategies collectively aim to contribute to the African Union UN Food Security and Climate Summit in 2026.

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Session 1.4:

Towards a Global Biodiversity Framework in the WIO and beyond: Achieving conservation outcomes at scale

INTRODUCTION

Continued regional and global expansion of area-based management tools (ABMTs) requires adequate investment in human connectivity and financial capacity, without which will likely lead to sub-optimal conservation and social outcomes. ABMT, including MPAs and other effective conservation measures (OECMs), mainly community managed areas, are both important tools to achieving the 30x30 target endorsed by countries under the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Community-led spatial management or Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) and small-scale fisheries management hold the key to securing the goods and services provided by ocean ecosystems and to delivering on the ambitions enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will be critical to the delivery of the Global Biodiversity Framework. This session focused on grappling with the challenge of building coastal MPAs and community capacity at scale and seeks to catalyse the establishment of a learning network that can provide the necessary and ongoing support to communities beyond project-level interventions.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Nirmal Shah (Nature Seychelles) set the tone with an opening that underscored the critical state of the WIO. The presentation focused on restoration within the framework of the 30x30 target of the GBF. In the Seychelles, an NGO purchased the first-ever island for the protection of a specific species, extending its coverage to the surrounding waters. BirdLife became a partner in the initiative. Following the 1980 coral bleaching and a subsequent tsunami that affected the reef, a large-scale coral gardening project, constituting the world's largest reef restoration effort, was initiated. This transformation allowed the area to maintain its protected status. The Seychelles warbler, that at the time was on the brink of extinction with only 26 birds left, prompted collaborative efforts with the government for restoration. However, faced with challenges, the focus shifted to engaging wealthy island owners, leading to the removal of non-ecologically valuable coconut trees and the planting of shrubs and ecologically significant trees to support bird populations. Funding included contributions from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAid). The transformed area is now recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA), representing a notable success. Today, there

are over 2500 of the Seychelles species of warblers and it is considered Near Threatened by IUCN Red List. Additionally, a coral restoration facility in Seychelles has been established, inviting scientists to contribute to the understanding of coral spawning.

Sam Petersen (WWF) presented a multifunctioning seascape approach to ocean management, emphasising community involvement from the outset to cultivate shared commitment across seascape actors. The key components of this approach include securing community rights, promoting community-led governance, addressing post-harvest loss in small scale fisheries, maintaining a healthy ecosystem, and ensuring community socio-economic benefits. Sam Petersen argued that relying on a project-by-project approach is not sustainable for capacity building, advocating instead for the development of a network of learning institutions. To resource this, she suggested a stacked/blended funding model involving private investors, donors, and public bodies. She provided an example involving 200 to 600 women and discussed the challenge of defining the boundaries of community enterprises. She highlighted the context-specific nature of this issue, emphasising that the community should identify its needs and preferred enterprises. While individuals from the community may engage in the private sector, they must possess a private sector mindset, ensuring sustainability in both projects and financing. The importance of designing programs that have a lasting impact and establishing networks that outlive the project duration was emphasised, leading to the prototyping of a new finance model.

Addressing capacity building, Sam Petersen raised the issue of learning from previous projects. She highlighted the need to evaluate the success of current capacity building activities to assess whether they were delivering long-term behaviour change, emphasising the need for explicit learning rather than relying solely on reports and case study boxes. She extended an invitation for people to join this learning initiative.

Thomas Sberna (IUCN) spoke about the Great Blue Wall, emphasising the interconnectedness of the ocean and stressed the importance of elevating African leadership in achieving a nature-positive world. He questioned how efforts to improve the triple planetary crisis could be accelerated. He advocated for a nature-people-climate blue economy, noting that discussions around the sustainable blue economy gained significant traction after the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference in Nairobi in 2018. IUCN, recognising the momentum, chose to concentrate on the “Regenerative Blue Economy”, focusing on regenerative seascapes, such as strengthening LMMAs. The approach involved connecting these regenerative seascapes to form a “blue wall”. Thomas explained that IUCN adopts a regional-Econosphere approach, identifying the low-hanging fruits within local communities. He highlighted the establishment of the Africa Heads of States’ Panel of Regional Blue Economy but acknowledged the existence of gaps in these initiatives.

David Obura (CORDIO — East Africa) focused on addressing the global inequality inherent in the triple planetary crisis. He highlighted the disproportionate impact, with high-income and upper-income countries contributing the most to the crisis, while low-income nations have a minimal footprint. The most significant losses are borne by the bottom 50% of the population, emphasising stark inequality. He questioned the feasibility of full recovery under the 30x30 target and urged consideration of whether the ambition for nature-positivity aligns with being people-positive. To tackle these challenges, he proposed specific actions. He emphasised the need to reduce drivers and overconsumption for high-income nations. He called for a transformation within the conservation community to shift toward reinvesting in nature for current services. Addressing the bottom 50%, he advocated for equity measures, including raising welfare, fostering equity, and promoting justice.

The presentation underscored the importance of locally led conservation using a shared spaces approach, focusing on the local scale, equity, and people. Comments during the session suggested that prioritising equity in decision-making could be a crucial approach. The need to identify the beneficiaries of conservation projects was emphasised, considering the varying appetite for such initiatives in poorer regions. The positive impact of restoration, not just on biodiversity but also on people, was highlighted. Concerns were raised about the lack of awareness regarding the extent of injustice for other species, particularly from the perspective of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). David suggested that improving the effectiveness of measuring carbon sequestration, ecological services, and accounting for nature contributions could provide indicators for addressing this issue. The idea of aspiring toward middle-income solutions rather than extremes and the complex nature of justice, especially in self-governance scenarios, were also discussed. The question of whether those in the 10% are willing to make significant sacrifices for the greater good was posed, reflecting on the broader societal responsibility in addressing global challenges.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- There are challenges in measuring injustice for other species, the need to prioritise equity in decision-making, and the potential benefits of aspiring toward middle-income solutions.
- There are complexities of self-governance, the necessity of forging agreements with communities.
- It is critical important to develop effective indicators in the pursuit of middle-income aspirations.

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	Samantha Petersen World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF
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Arthur Tuda, WIOMSA



Samantha Petersen, WWF

Session 1.5: Coastal adaptation in the Western Indian Ocean: From theory to practice

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between ocean and climate was specifically referenced in the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) published in February 2022. However, despite advancements in recent years, there are still numerous opportunities to strengthen ocean-climate action at the national and regional level. There is a need to consider how to integrate and strengthen ocean-based action in existing national mandates and work plans. We must transition from “making the case for” to “how to deliver” concrete actions for coastal and marine ecosystems for climate change adaptation.

This session aimed to highlight the need for global, regional, and national level policy support for planning for ocean and coastal adaptation to the impact of climate change. The session also sought to facilitate discussion on the scientific, local, and indigenous knowledge needs for ocean and coastal adaptation planning and implementation. The United Nations Framework Convention for Climate change (UNFCCC) National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process supports the development of NAPs. However, the specific inclusion of adaptation planning for ocean and coastal areas in the NAPs is not sufficient in general, but also specifically for regions such as the WIO in which the blue economy is making a substantial contribution to national accounts and the well-being of communities. The session presented the NAP process, outlined the need for coastal adaptation and provided feedback on regional NAP processes.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Louis Celliers (Climate Service Center Germany, GERICS) opened the session by outlining the purpose and structure of the UNFCCC NAPs process. The NAP process is a mechanism to aid Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to formulate comprehensive plans of action for climate change adaptation. The outcomes of this session are intended to contribute to what is known as Supplementary Guidance to NAP Technical Guidance. The information exchanged in this session will also contribute to subsequent workshops, facilitate further exploration of key themes, and accelerate the integration of scientific services into actionable strategies.

During the subsequent presentation, **Judy Beaumont** (International Ocean Institute — Southern Africa, IOI-SA) emphasised the important role of government in addressing climate change by identifying gaps and understanding the necessary data and stakeholders involved. She highlighted the varying levels of awareness about the climate crisis across sectors, such as tourism and fisheries. Referring to Chapter 9 of the IPCC AR6 report, she underscored its utility in providing insights into the risks and drivers of climate change, particularly concerning food security. Judy Beaumont pointed out the significant risk of flooding in coastal areas and cities like Dar es Salaam, Alexandria, and Cairo between the present and 2050. Stressing the importance of a pan-African perspective, she advocated for multi-stakeholder involvement in adaptation planning processes. Additionally, she noted the need for tailored approaches based on the specific impacts anticipated in different regions and highlighted the limited presence of climate change framework laws in certain African countries.

The presenters emphasised the role of climate services in translating climate data into policy-ready information. Louis Celliers pointed to a 1) insufficient interest in coasts and oceans at fora where NAPs are of central importance, e.g., UNFCCC NAP Expos, and 2) a similar disinterest in NAPs at fora where oceans and coasts are central themes for discussion, e.g., scientific symposia. NAPs are designed to facilitate adaptation and readiness for climate change through a standardised process involving assessment and planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Currently (at the end of 2023), there are 48 plans from developing countries available for scrutiny, including eight sectoral adaptation plans. Louis Celliers highlighted the avail-

ability of technical guidelines and supplementary material tailored to specific sectors like agriculture and fisheries. However, an analysis revealed that most NAPs do not adequately address the importance of the adaptation of activities linked to the coast and ocean. Given the importance of the blue economy, this is a weakness of the NAP process. He stressed the importance of providing support for the implementation strategies of NAPs, emphasising that action needs to occur at all levels of governance including at the local level.

Potlako Khati (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, South Africa), representing the national government in South Africa, presented a case study on coastal zone adaptation and NAPs in South Africa. In 2013, South Africa initiated long-term adaptation plans that assessed the impacts of climate change on weather patterns, predicting population movements, particularly towards coastal cities (undertaken by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR). The implementation plans emphasised inclusivity, participation, and equity in planning for the population shift towards coastal areas. Additionally, heat risk, which was found to be lower in coastal zones, was considered. Impact models were developed to identify and understand the buildings that would be affected by these climate-induced changes.

During the group discussion, several key points emerged:

1. Planning in uncertainty:

The discussion highlighted the importance of rigorous scientific data, particularly in the context of advising actions where climate impacts will displace communities and potentially cause climate migration. Satellite imagery, specifically focused on the northern Mozambique channel, revealed evidence of regular occurrences of cold-water layers. The complexity of implementing NAPs was emphasised. Participants stressed the need for dedicated processes and spaces for debates to address the nuances inherent in planning for climate change impacts. There were several comments from the floor on the importance and care with which uncertain climate data are communicated to decision- and policymakers. The different roles and responsibilities of scientists, boundary agents, intermediaries, managers, and policymakers were highlighted. NAPs require policy-ready information that can inform a wide range of stakeholders at all levels of governance.

2. Communication strategy:

Participants discussed the importance of presenting information in a way that is practical and relatable and that could be used to inform achievable actions over timeframes that are relevant to policy- and decision-makers (e.g., 5, 10, 15 years). It was suggested that being practical about the timeframe could facilitate better communication, especially with policymakers who operate within short-term political cycles. The need for expertise in ocean and climate matters within African negotiators' climate groups was highlighted. This expertise is important for informed decision-making in UNFCCC COP climate negotiations.

3. Tipping points and human population movement:

The discussion touched on the challenges posed by tipping points, emphasising the significant uncertainty associated with these phenomena. Human population movement emerged as a key consideration for NAPs, requiring strategies that address short, medium, and long-term issues. Settlements and their relation to Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11 – Climate Action) were discussed. The potential financial implications, including the cost of displacement, were considered, particularly in the context of urban areas like Cape Town.

4. Integration with insurance industry:

Questions were raised about whether climate change predictions and projections are used by insurance companies. It was noted that confidence levels in the data are crucial for the insurance industry to act effectively.

5. Justice and equity:

The discussion concluded by highlighting the need to consider social justice and poverty in the context of planning for new infrastructure. Existing laws may not adequately address these considerations, and there is a need for a more just approach.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- At the Marine Region Forum session, the knowledge on the NAPs process was limited, as expected. The role of ocean and coastal fora such as the Marine Regions Forum is important to create awareness and establish the policy needs with regards to the ocean and coastal sustainability and the impact of climate change.
- For regions such as the WIO, the blue economy is an important element of national development with a high expectation of its contribution to GDP. NAPs should contain elements that will contribute to climate action and that will support the sustainability of the blue economy. Supplementary material to the NAP technical guidance is a practical way to provide a structured approach for LDCs and other coastal countries to improve their NAPs to include ocean and coast climate actions. The purpose of the supplementary material would be to provide greater insight into the requirements for including ocean and coastal climate actions into the NAP process.
- Climate and impact modelling efforts are ongoing and provide essential information on the nature of climate change. The challenge lies in synthesising these scientific efforts to provide practical, decision-ready, and relevant information for ocean and coastal managers. It is crucial to identify common threads in adaptation thinking and translate them into actionable content that can effectively support and enhance climate resilience efforts.

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Listening to the presentations.

IIED/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou

Strand 2: Fostering a sustainable blue economy

With its global impact on livelihoods, the ocean serves as a lifeline for millions. As countries recognise the ocean's potential for economic growth, it becomes imperative to ensure the blue economy is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive. This strand delved into the responsible utilisation of ocean resources while safeguarding vital ecosystems. Engaging sessions on circular economy, science to policy and society, Marine Spatial Planning, and private sector involvement aimed to foster a sustainable and vibrant blue economy. Collaboration was identified as a key factor in fostering a sustainable blue economy in terms of accessing financial resources, sharing experiences, prioritising actions, and to increase the visibility of successful initiatives. There needs to be political will to develop a sustainable blue economy and creating enabling legislation. This could include supporting entrepreneurship including for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises; remove barriers to investment, introduce tax incentives and involving savings and credit cooperative organisations and climate trust funds. There need to be metrics and frameworks that can measure return on investment against clear indicators. This will also require a better understanding of the frameworks in place in the private sector.

Session 2.1:

Circular economy for a more inclusive sustainable blue tourism in coastal and island destinations

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is a significant contributor to the global economy, but it also generates negative impacts, for example plastic leaking to the environment. In coastal and island destinations, tourism-related impacts on the environment are often more acute and exacerbated due to their territorial features (e.g., resource scarcity, endemic ecosystems) and by the extractive economic model. To mitigate tourism impacts, the interest in integrating circular economy models in tourism policies and practices is growing to maximise resource valorisation and minimise waste and pollution. Consequently, in coastal and island destinations, the integration of circular economy solutions is increasingly supported to foster a more sustainable blue tourism economy for local communities and ecosystems. Moreover, circularity is becoming a means to enhance inclusivity in the economy by reshaping value chains and rethinking consumption patterns. This highlights the importance of circular economy models not only to minimise the pressures of tourism activities on the environment, but also to generate social value and innovation. Coastal and island destinations face challenges as well as opportunities to a circular economy that should be mitigated and/or capitalised through context-aware policy solutions. The workshop drew on presentations and case studies of destinations that are successfully fostering a circular economy in their tourism sector fostering innovation and inclusivity.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This session centred on promoting a sustainable blue economy by implementing circular economy principles within the WIO and beyond. It underscored the significance of the circular economy in blue tourism, particularly in waste reduction, material circulation, and environmental regeneration. The session stressed the imperative for an inclusive shift toward a circular economy, especially in regions where tourism and poverty intersect.

Chris Whyte (African Circular Economy Network, ACEN) presented observations, indicating a rising emphasis on comprehensive supply chain analysis in the tourism sector. This includes waste management and sustainable resource utilisation, aligned with an increased consideration for ESG reporting by organisations. Sustainable tourism was highlighted as pivotal in achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals while safeguarding natural heritage and contributing to the blue economy.

Samson Obiene (CORDIO East Africa) highlighted sustainable tourism challenges, focusing on policy frameworks. He emphasised the potential of community-based approaches to enhance sustainable tourism in the WIO, linking it to conservation and local stewardship. Examples of blue tourism initiatives in the WIO, such as the Diani-Shimoni Seascape, Comoros' community involvement in MPA management, and Madagascar's Nosy Bay, demonstrated the regional willingness of integration of sustainable practices with local communities and environmental conservation.

Yvonne Waweru, (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) showcased blue tourism opportunities in the WIO region. It underscored the substantial role of blue tourism in the WIO region's economies, contributing 10–20% to countries' GDP, primarily tied to the ocean. The presentation emphasised the necessity of regional collaboration to expand the sector and improve MPA management for greater benefits.

Ensuing discussions encompassed climate resilience, potential for local and intra-Africa tourism, and the draft WIO Regional Ocean Governance Strategy prioritising blue tourism. Sustainability and continuity in nature-based tourism initiatives were explored, focusing on internal financing mechanisms and capacity building for long-lasting community-based tourism engagement. Market competitiveness, the East African Community's (EAC) tourism common market negotiation, the establishment of a working group for blue tourism innovation, global tourism standards, and ongoing negotiations within the EAC for standardised tourism markets were also addressed. Participants recommended linking eco-tourism and cultural tourism to maximise collective market benefits. Insightful case studies were presented, such as the Sustainable Island Mauritius Project (2018–2022), highlighting efforts to establish a green destination and raise awareness of blue tourism among tourists, locals, and stakeholders.

Chumbe Island Coral Park, an eco-lodge operating an MPA in Zanzibar, was featured as another case study. The lodge's ecological design showcased aspects of construction, water and energy generation, and circularity through rainwater harvesting, solar energy reliance, and the use of locally sourced palm thatched roofing materials from coconut farmers. Discussions highlighted the integration of local materials, crafts from artisans, and local cuisine supply chains in the lodge's operations, emphasising inclusivity. After an overview of scalable recommendations for circular economy designs, delegates engaged in breakout sessions exploring key barriers to adopting a sustainable and circular blue tourism sector. They subsequently proposed policy actions and regulatory changes to foster an enabling environment for sustainable and circular blue tourism. The delegates emphasised effective collaboration among stakeholders to leverage opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

This workshop session aimed at identifying 1) the current barriers to develop a more sustainable blue tourism sector in the WIO and beyond; 2) enabling policy actions; and 3) potentially collaborative mechanisms. Some key themes are reported below:

- Designing for recyclability and plastic recycling by prioritising design for recyclability, especially for plastics used in the tourism sector, highlighting the importance of closely link tourism operation with plastic usage minimisation and the adoption of alternatives.
- Community engagement challenges seems to be mainly related to financing mechanisms available to communities, the need to build business-oriented approaches to stimulate community interest with the support and in partnership with private sector. Collaborative frameworks for blue tourism are increasingly needed to enhance regional approaches to support more sustainable and resilient tourism sector through cohesive strategies.
- Private sector engagement and institutional involvement is a necessity to ensure effective involvement and support from higher-level bodies and endorsing existing and future solutions. Moreover, it remains essential to encourage an attractive environment for circular economy investments in blue tourism with long-term commitments. Yet, it becomes increasingly essential to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by developing specialised regulatory

frameworks supporting tourism SMEs in circular economy practices, including investments, and building regulations, which should increasingly embrace circular economy principles. Support to SMEs should also include fiscal incentives for best practices and better link these businesses with supply chains with actors embracing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the Polluter Pays Principle.

The session highlighted major challenges to the adoption of a more sustainable and circular blue tourism sector, including:

- Lack of alternatives for food plastic packaging and disposable plastic bags.
- There is no regional guideline or strategy or framework in place to address the plastic issue.
- Limited financial resources to embrace circular and sustainable solutions in blue tourism.
- Limited capacity and resources (including technical capacity and monitoring mechanisms).
- Inadequate political good-will to support a more sustainable blue tourism.
- Lack of transparency.
- Lack of relevant and coherent policies.
- Lack of innovation, research, and technological skills.
- Inadequate integration between stakeholders, e.g., government and private sector.
- Identifying alternative activities for affected livelihoods due to policy changes.

Policy suggestions to mitigate the barriers:

- Exploration of substitutes for food plastic packaging and single-use plastic bags.
- Creation of a regional framework, such as Our Blue Future or within the Nairobi Convention, aimed at enabling the adoption of circular economy practices in tourism.
- Raising awareness about sustainable practices among industry and consumers.
- Ensuring transparency in reporting and adherence to established standards.
- Building capacity through the exchange of best practices and technology transfer.
- Implementation of a collaborative mechanism, potentially through the African Union, to facilitate this process.

Collaborative actions:

- Establishment of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among stakeholders to support the mainstreaming of circular economy solutions in the region's tourism sector.
- Identification of shared priorities and collaborative development of joint action plans. For instance, initiatives like the African Union's Blue Future and ACEN.
- Creation of a platform dedicated to sharing information and knowledge among stakeholders.

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RAPPORTEUR	Luise von Pogrell TMG — Think Tank for Sustainability

Session 2.2.

From science to policy and society: Co-designing sustainable blue economic development in the framework of the Ocean Decade

INTRODUCTION

This session provided a space for dialogue and learning on the importance of working across the science — policy — society interface for sustainable blue economic development. It showcased examples of how co-designed, transformative ocean science and knowledge has contributed to building a sustainable ocean economy at the national and sub-national levels, with a focus on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The session identified the potential roles, challenges and synergies of researchers, policy- and decision-makers as well as social actors, such as indigenous peoples and local communities, in advancing sustainable ocean development. It highlighted challenges and opportunities to increase the use of ocean science in the WIO region to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Roadmap for Africa under the United Nation's Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (UN Ocean Decade), and the Global Biodiversity Framework. Finally, the session presented the potential role of the UN Ocean Decade as a framework to increase the generation and use of co-designed ocean science for sustainable blue economic development.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Vladimir Ryabinin (IOC-UNESCO) opened the session by emphasising the need for a holistic and sustainable ocean planning to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14 (life below water). He underscored the importance of investing in ocean science to drive such planning.

Sven Stoebener (GIZ), on behalf of **Katrin Bornemann** (German Embassy, Dar es Salaam), highlighted Germany's commitments to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the Ocean Decade. He introduced the MeerWissen³ programme and Germany's support of the Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative (WIOGI), and the Blue Action Fund, aiming for sustainable ocean development through improved science-policy-society collaboration.

Kerry Sink (South African National Biodiversity Institute, SANBI) presented on the importance of co-design and investing in relationships between stakeholders to achieve sustainable ocean solutions. She highlighted the need for more equal partnerships in science, emphasising the strength and creativity derived from diversity.

George Rushinigisha (Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute, TAFIRI) and **Vatosoa Rakoton-drazafy** (IUCN) presented on the success, challenges and lessons-learned from two case studies focussed on co-design in fisheries management and community-led marine conservation. They highlighted the necessity of overcoming biases towards local communities and facilitating peer-to-peer exchange through forums and mentorship across communities to increase stewardship and data quality in these projects.

In the discussion, participants reflected on ways to strengthen co-designing efforts at the science-policy-society interface. In round table discussions they discussed barriers, tools and recommendations regarding increased inclusivity, positive impacts, and capacity building at the science-policy-society interface.

Jacqueline Uku (KMFRI) summarised the session's discussions, adding insights from her experiences with co-design efforts involving coastal communities in the establishment of seagrass

[3] <https://meerwissen.org/>

closure. This involved exploring expectations and the responsibilities of scientists in such initiatives. She highlighted the need for frameworks, metrics, and tools to measure the success of co-design efforts to enable a better assessment of outcomes. Jacqueline stressed the importance of inclusive stakeholder identification, particularly involving local communities in publications and knowledge products. Lastly, she spoke on the significance of co-creation for the United Nations Ocean Decade Taskforce and informed the participants about the 6th Call for Decade actions on co-creation for Africa and the Caribbean⁴ — encouraging groups and institutions to participate and contribute to sustainable ocean management. She also highlighted the upcoming Barcelona Ocean Decade Conference in April 2024⁵ as a valuable opportunity to showcase co-produced aspects resulting from co-creation initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

Recommendations on building capacities in co-design at the science-policy-society interface that enable evidence-based decision-making and needs-based action focussed on identifying priorities among stakeholders, leading to a science in service of society, developing facilitation skills and use interactive methods to have more meaningful discussions. Building capacity for science communication was identified as an important step towards better evidence-based decision-making, including the need for clear recommendation that can be taken up by policy makers instead of only articles being produced.

On the policy side, it was highlighted that adaptive management is needed, so that policies can be improved according to best new knowledge. Lastly, the need for identifying already existing endeavours and initiatives, to avoid replication and stakeholder fatigue was noted, including the necessity of providing resources to this part.

Recommendations included:

- Work across scales to address diverse perspectives and challenges effectively.
- Strengthen representations to amplify the voices of marginalised stakeholder groups.
- Use bottom-up approaches to incorporate multi-stakeholder perspectives in a projects design phase, to test approaches (proto-typing) and allow for changes according to feedback.
- Develop metrics and frameworks for measuring success of co-design initiatives.

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[4] <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/ocean-decade-launches-new-call-decade-actions-no-06/2023-will-support-co-design-new-decade-actions>

[5] <https://oceandecade.org/events/2024-ocean-decade-conference/>



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Session 2.3.

Articulating Marine Spatial Planning initiatives towards the co-creation of regional visions

INTRODUCTION

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) has become increasingly important in the context of ocean governance and tightly linked to countries' plans to develop their blue economy strategies. The WIO region has the goal for an inclusive and holistic MSP process that produces a regional marine spatial plan to support the sustainable management of ocean and coastal ecosystems for all and, while individual countries are making progress in the development of marine spatial plans, both at national and sub-national level, there is still a lot of work to be done within the region to articulate national and regional initiatives. For that, support has been provided through international cooperation mechanisms (e.g., WIO Symphony tool developed with the Nairobi Convention⁶, its member states and the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management as well as international training programs on MSP). Similarly, other marine regions are also working or aiming for such articulation. The session kicked-off with the presentation of lessons learned from the WIO region and then discussions followed about the way forward in different marine regions.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tim Andrew (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) presented on the role of the MSP task force in enhancing MSP in the WIO region, leading to the development of the WIO-Symphony tool. **Harrison Ochieng Ong'anda** (KMFRI) presented on MSP efforts in the WIO region and highlighted the MSP Strategic Framework and the importance of dynamic stakeholder engagement in the various stages of the MSP processes. **Jacqueline Uku** (KMFRI) reported back on key messages from the 2nd MSP Forum for Africa⁷ and touched upon the role of MSP in advancing Africa's Blue Economy Strategy and the United Nation's Ocean Decade call for Africa.

Arthur Tuda (WIOMSA) spoke on the significance of ecosystems as the bedrock of the blue economy. He highlighted the disparity between ecologists predicting a decline of natural marine resources and economists' promises for rapid growth in the blue economy sector. He explained the necessity to address these trends with MSP as a tool to do so and how natural capital depletion needs to be understood as a market failure. He went on to call for a paradigm change towards a regenerative approach to natural capital, reiterating how blue economies need to entail environmental protection and enhancement, social progress, and economic development in equal parts so that the benefits of the ocean ecosystems are shared among all who co-create the blue economy.

Abdoulaye Diagana (Abidjan Convention Secretariat) and **Stephen Kirkman** (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, South Africa), also highlighted collaborative efforts in MSP at regional levels and incorporating Ecologically or Biodiversity Significant Areas (EBSAs) as a data layer in MSP.

During the group work, participants were asked to think about the needs for moving forward with MSP on a regional level, how to overcome the challenges of sector integration, and how to best coordinate the various initiatives.

[6] <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/wio-symphony/>

[7] <https://www.mspglobal2030.org/the-2nd-mspforum-for-africa-strengthened-the-collaborations-between-unesco-unep-and-the-african-union-towards-an-ecosystem-based-african-blue-economy/>

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- Discussions underscored the importance of aligning MSP with the African Union's vision for a prosperous blue economy, emphasising its role as a science-based cornerstone for sustainable economic growth, societal well-being, and environmental stewardship.
- To apply MSP on a regional level, participants saw the need for a regional data-sharing policy, finding alternative financing, and capacity building such as MSP courses at a regional level and needs assessments.
- It was proposed to align regional MSP plans with existing EBSA boundaries.
- Proposals on how to best coordinate different MSP initiatives at the regional level included to use clearing house mechanisms and the development of a regional framework, as well as a regional platform for initiatives to engage.
- It was suggested that to ensure the dissemination of information on initiatives among a wide range of stakeholders it would be beneficial to contact the Regional Seas Conventions before projects/concepts are being developed, and to establish a basket fund under the UNDP to pool resources/funding and address common objectives.
- To overcome challenges regarding sector integration participants highlighted the need to identify common priorities and challenges.

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Session 2.4 & 2.5.

Advancing private sector involvement in ocean sustainability and governance in the Western Indian Ocean

INTRODUCTION

Ocean health and climate change continue to dominate the global policy agenda. However, the private sector has received less attention in the ocean governance and blue economy discussions and policy processes. The private sector has a profound role in catalysing and accelerating the transition to inclusive sustainable blue economy. In this session, we focused specifically on the private sector actors with indirect and direct interest in coastal and marine areas of the WIO region. The aim of this session was to highlight the role of the private sector in advancing inclusive sustainable blue economy agenda in the WIO. More specifically the session explored current business practices, identifying barriers to their effective contribution to improved ocean governance and innovative solutions to address these challenges. It was expected that this session will highlight how the private sector can enhance their sustainable business practices and position themselves competitively in the growing blue economy space in the WIO region. Studies have shown that business that embrace sustainable practices in their operations have significantly increased their profitability, created more greener/bluer jobs, reduced their production and operational costs, access to new markets and compliance to the framework condition.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Edward Kimakwa (GIZ) and **Georges Mba-Asseko** (African Union) welcome the participants and facilitated this session which focussed on the role of the private sector in the WIO's blue economy. It dwelled on existing private sector-led Inclusive Sustainable Blue Economy (ISBE) solutions, making private sector contributions more impactful, and strengthening partnerships.

Robin Farrington (GIZ/Our Blue Future Secretariat) introduced challenges and opportunities for private sector engagement in sustainable practices. He talked about how the private sector can be supported in becoming more sustainable and said that highlighting risks from unsustainable practices and climate change impacts can lead to more sustainable practices in private sector. He proceeded to introduce four categories of risk: regulatory risks (e.g., fines); reputational risks (from customers and local communities); operational risks (e.g., water and energy supply); and natural risks (natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods). He introduced Our Blue Future⁸, an alliance and collaboration system that creates a space for private sector entities to engage and pushing evidence-based advocacy, awareness creation, partnership formation, and support for innovative and strategic actions.

Aboud Jumbe (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar) emphasised the important role of the private sector in advancing the tourism blue value chain, supporting community empowerment, engaging in carbon dialogue, financing programs for protecting critical habitats, and contributing to innovative technologies for monitoring and surveillance, underlining the necessity of involving the private sector in coastal management, particularly in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Plans. He highlighted the commitment of the government of Tanzania to develop a nationwide ocean governance framework, which includes collaborating with the private sector and other stakeholders to ensure the realisation of sustainable blue jobs, community revenues, and other benefits in the realm of marine resource use.

Georges Mba-Asseko (African Union) highlighted the alignment of the session with the African Union's Agenda 2063 for inclusive growth and sustainable development and touched upon the rising momentum of the blue economy in Africa. He called for response to private sector needs with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and creating an enabling environment, reforming land tenure systems, collaborating with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), attracting investments, formalising informal activities, engaging the African diaspora, and integrating commercial banks and new technologies.

Sophie Masipa (World Ocean Council, WOC) described the WOC's ocean investment platform and asked how have we engaged the private sector and what can be done better because inviting a representative from the private sector, **Sibylle Riedmiller** (Chumbe Island Coral Park) to elaborate on her experiences. Sibylle Riedmiller presented a case study on scaling SME blue tourism solutions in the WIO region, spotlighting Chumbe Island Coral Park as Tanzania's pioneering private marine park addressing coral reef threats. The presentation emphasised tourism as a low-impact, non-extractive industry and detailed the park's initiatives, including integrating ocean conservation into business operations, community ranger training, and conservation education programs. Covering the model island's operational costs and sustainability approaches, the presentation highlighted the crucial role of SME Blue Tourism investors in directly supporting marine conservation, aligning with CBD GBF's call for private sector involvement, especially in Privately Protected Areas. The case study underscored MPAs as fundamental to blue tourism revenues and identified key needs for blue tourism investors, including a conducive investment climate and long-term security.

Chris Whyte (ACEN) presented a case study focusing on combatting marine plastic pollution through circularity, advocating for a circular economy and multi-stakeholder innovation. The

[8] <https://our-blue-future.org/>

presentation addressed the plastic waste issue in Africa, emphasising the need for sustainable solutions like recycled building materials, which are currently underutilised. The proposed solutions involve utilising proven, affordable technology to transform local plastic waste in industries, stressing the significance of small-scale applications for a just transition to a sustainable economy. The presentation also urged governments to explore plastic energy conversion for electricity generation, meeting Africa's energy needs and positioning energy as a catalyst for secondary development. It concluded by underscoring the importance of capturing plastic before it enters the sea.

Participants identified the following strategic points to enhance private sector impacts in the inclusive sustainable blue economy (ISBE):

- **Capacity building:** Emphasis was placed on comprehensive capacity building across various facets of the blue economy, promoting sustainable alternatives such as mariculture over traditional fishing practices, and educating small private entrepreneurs on management, fishing practices, and social and environmental responsibility, with support for SMEs.
- **Investment and incentives:** Recommendations included tax reforms, financial support for reporting standards (ESG, IFRS, ISSB) and investments in waste collection and infrastructure. Recognition and rewarding of private sector efforts, along with redirecting resources to community projects, especially in sustainable fisheries, and supporting investments in blue SMEs, were also suggested.
- **Legal framework:** The importance of enabling policies, formulation of policies supporting Public-Private Partnerships, flexibility, proactive measures, and the provision of concessions were underscored to create a conducive legal framework.
- **Metrics:** The necessity of establishing a proper coordination system to monitor investments and their impact on ISBE was emphasised.
- **Communication and engagements:** Strategies included increasing communication around ISBE, establishing a structural framework for collective collaboration, engaging the private sector from the design phase, creating a platform for the private sector to self-identify existing opportunities, providing a platform for private sector voices in blue economy fora, highlighting the profitability of sustainable and inclusive practices through training and capacity building, identifying and mitigating conflicts, and encouraging private sector adoption of the UNEPFI Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles⁹.

Furthermore, they identified the following opportunities for scaling up resources and strengthening partnerships for ISBE solutions:

- **Capacity building:** Participants underscored the need for robust capacity building and sensitisation efforts. To gain deeper insights into private sector involvement, suggestions were made to commission studies that map opportunities and subsequently engages stakeholders. Additionally, there was a call to broaden the offering of investment opportunities in the ISBE sector. The importance of effective research and communication strategies was also highlighted to enhance awareness and collaboration.
- **Collaborative solutions:** The discussions emphasised the value of an integrated approach, advocating for collaboration between communities, businesses, and conservationists. Participants proposed the enhancement of existing SMEs acceleration programs and leveraging existing inventories effectively. Participants endorsed the ideas of exploring the potential of carbon credits through technological innovations and fostering entrepreneurship by promoting business ideas and pitching competitions. Furthermore, there was a collective commitment to collaborate with industries, particularly in developing a robust plastics waste management strategy. Establishing meaningful links between projects and businesses through blended finance mechanisms was recognised as a strategic move to drive ISBE solutions forward.
- **Policy:** Participants emphasised the need to develop mechanisms that incentivise positive change within the private sector and greater advocacy for a blue/green transition.

[9] <https://www.unepfi.org/blue-finance/the-principles/>

Fahd Al-Guthmy (Wildlife Conservation Society) spoke on the role of the private sector in financing the transition to ISBE in the WIO region. He spoke on the Miamba Yetu: Sustainable Reef Investments programme being implemented along the length of Kenya and Tanzania's coasts — including the Zanzibar archipelago. The programme is funded by the Global Fund for Coral Reefs which was launched in 2021 as the first ever blended finance instrument dedicated to coral reefs. Being an investment vehicle, more can be done to address issues of ISBE by supporting businesses that directly or indirectly benefit coral reefs with catalytic funding including concessionary debt and impact capital. Bankable or investable projects that can benefit include those in coastal tourism, land-use management, fisheries management, waste management and blue carbon. Case studies were presented on waste-to-value treatment plants, MPA co-management with revenue streams and plastic waste recycling. WCS is undertaking this work in partnership with conservation finance experts — Okavango Capital Partners and Conservation Capital, as well as other stakeholders engaged in coral reef conservation and improved fisheries.

Graham Haylor (Niras International Consulting) presented on the Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN) Grant Programme, a competitive grants scheme providing financial support to projects with the aim of delivering lasting change to the marine environment and for coastal communities, as part of the Blue Planet Fund. The OCEAN Grants Programme will disburse at least £20m of awards through two funding windows between February 2024 and March 2025. The initial funding round, set to open in early 2024, will award grants of up to £250,000 to small-scale, local, in-country organisations and up to £3 million to organisations with the capacity to deliver large-scale solutions. The first call for proposals is due to launch in February 2024.

In a second round of breakout sessions, the participants discussed how to catalyse sustainable private sector investments in the blue economy and how to promote inclusivity and access to sustainable financing by SMEs. Strategies included promoting ESG compliance through frameworks like ISSB and IFRS. Developing models of best practices, access to technical assistance packages and tax incentives were suggested to encourage private sector engagement.

In terms of promoting inclusivity and access to sustainable financing for SMEs in the blue economy sector, several strategies were put forth during the discussions: Participants highlighted the importance of leveraging associations memberships as a pathway to promote inclusivity. They emphasised the need for associations to focus on building the capacity of skilled personnel within SMEs, facilitating their engagement and access to sustainable financing opportunities. Suggestions were made for the provision of tailored grants and soft loans tailored to meet SME's specific needs, establishing credit lines for SMEs, including the implementation of microcredit initiatives, and involving Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs) and Climate Trust Funds (CTF). Participants emphasised the role of financial intermediaries and the need for regulatory structures to align with and adopt measures that specifically cater to micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). This alignment was viewed as essential to remove barriers and create an enabling environment for SMEs seeking to contribute the ISBE.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- The private sector can play a crucial role in advancing the tourism blue value chain, supporting community empowerment, engaging in carbon dialogue, financing programs for protecting critical habitats, and contributing to innovative technologies for monitoring and surveillance.
- Capacity building is required to interact more effectively with the private sector including a better understanding of entrepreneurial and investment opportunities particularly for micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).
- Better understanding of the private sector frameworks is required, including ESG reporting, ISSB and IFRS.
- There are innovative economic opportunities that should be explored to access carbon credits, ecosystem restoration, waste-to-value treatment plants, MPA co-management with revenue streams and plastic waste recycling.

- An enabling policy framework is needed to remove barriers to investment and encourage MSMEs in contributing to a sustainable blue economy and promote a blue/green transition and support public private partnerships.
- Suggestions were made for the provision of tailored grants and soft loans tailored to meet MSMEs' specific needs, establishing credit lines for MSMEs, including the implementation of microcredit initiatives, and involving Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs) and Climate Trust Funds (CTF).
- Blended finance mechanisms were recognised as strategic to drive ISBE solutions forward.
- There is value in an integrated approach, with collaboration between communities, businesses, and conservationists.
- Recommendations included tax reforms, financial support for reporting standards (ESG, IFRS, ISSB) and investments in waste collection and infrastructure.

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Presentations and group work in the Fostering a sustainable blue economy workshops.



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Strand 3: Implementing global goals at the regional level

Despite a troubled geopolitical context, the international community continues to rely on multilateralism and to develop instruments aimed at preserving the ocean health. In recent months, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and an internationally legally binding treaty on the conservation and sustainable use of high seas biodiversity (BBNJ Agreement) have been adopted. Negotiations for a global treaty on plastics are underway, and states are discussing the future of deep-seabed mining. This strand examined the role of marine regions in achieving global goals and contributing to international negotiations. Collaboration was identified as key to addressing transboundary and global challenges and the global treaties and agreements can catalyse national action. Knowledge-based decision making is required for these large and complex challenges, and a precautionary approach should be used until adequate information and policy is in place to make responsible, fair, and equitable decisions.

Session 3.1.

Negotiations on deep-sea mining: Where do we stand?

INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental discussions concerning the exploitation of deep-sea mineral resources are gathering pace at the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which is increasingly in the public spotlight. ISA member states have expressed diverse positions on the development of the Mining Code, and recent ISA meetings have seen increasing calls for a moratorium / precautionary pause. The African Group has regularly highlighted equity issues and stressed the importance of the Common Heritage of Humankind principle. However, the region has been under-represented in the discussions, with many states noting that they face significant capacity challenges. This session provided an overview of ongoing discussions at the ISA and allowed WIO stakeholders to exchange on possible future pathways.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ben Boteler (RIFS) introduced the session, highlighting that the discussions on seabed mining are currently under the spotlight because of the ongoing debate on the minerals needed for the energy transition, because some companies have declared their readiness to start mining and because calls to halt development of seabed mining are growing, including from states, scientists, NGOs, and the private sector.

An overview on deep sea science was provided by **Kerry Sink** (SANBI), and **Kirsty McQuaid** (SANBI / University of Plymouth) presented the knowns and unknowns of deep-sea ecosystems. She underlined the diversity of mineral-related deep-sea ecosystems (polymetallic nodule fields, hydrothermal vents, and ferromanganese crusts on seamounts), highlighted the importance of these ecosystems for biodiversity and ecosystem services, and raised questions about the lack of knowledge regarding baseline characterisation, life history traits, and ecological risks.

To introduce the legal and policy issues surrounding deep sea mining, participants watched the film *The trouble with mining the deep*¹⁰ and an initial discussion took place on socioeconomic, legal, environmental and equity aspects of deep sea mining, moderated by **Minna Epps** (IUCN).

[10] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BQuU6JbeL4>

Pradeep Singh (RIFS) gave an overview of the main issues currently being discussed at the ISA, including the developments of a mining code, the 2-year rule and the period review. He also recalled the ISA's mandate and functioning, as well as the procedures involved in exploration contracts. A panel discussion followed, with **Robert Kibiwot** (Kenya International Boundaries Office), **Forbi Perise** (Sustainable Ocean Alliance), **Torsten Thiele** (Global Ocean Trust) and **Chrissant Barbe** (Seychelles government), which focused on e.g., the economic and financial aspects of the common heritage status of mineral resources, the position of the African group at ISA and of some specific countries, the loophole in the 2-year rule, the operationalisation of the “Enterprise”, environmental risks and the concern of transboundary harm for African coastal states, potential impacts on fisheries, livelihoods and human rights, the need for civil society mobilisation, the limited place of youth and indigenous peoples in the discussion on seabed mining, the growing number of states pleading for a moratorium or a precautionary pause, and the need for a reform of the ISA.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- A dive into deep-sea science reveals the diversity and richness of ecosystems found at the bottom of the ocean and the critical knowledge gaps in baseline characterisation, life history traits and ecological risks.
- Ongoing discussions at the International Seabed Authority cover a wide range of particularly complex issues (mining code, periodic review, 2-year rule), and reveal the need for an overall debate of whether we need deep seabed mining and whether allowing deep sea mining to commence now would simply end up causing more burdens than benefits (if any) to humankind.
- Discussions are gathering pace on the future of seabed mineral resources, with some companies having declared their readiness to start mining while a growing number of stakeholders, including states, are calling for a moratorium or a precautionary pause, highlighting that numerous knowledge gaps remain and that insurances on the fair and equitable sharing of benefits are missing.

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Dixon Waruinge, Nairobi Convention Secretariat and Minna Epps, IUCN in the implementing global goals at the regional level workshop

Session 3.2.

Towards a healthy and clean Western Indian Ocean: building on the region's successes to fight against plastic pollution

INTRODUCTION

Plastic, initially a symbol of innovation, has evolved into a global crisis, impacting the environment, society, economy, and health. The WIO, while consuming less plastic per capita than the global north, still sees five million tonnes of plastic used annually, with 195 thousand tonnes leaking into waterways and ocean, harming both humans and biodiversity. Some WIO countries have implemented policies like product bans (e.g., plastic bags) and recycling, but plastic governance faces challenges like inconsistency and industry resistance. In 2022, negotiations began for the elaboration of an international treaty to combat plastic pollution, covering the entire plastics lifecycle. Africa has been a pioneer in addressing plastic pollution, and this session aimed to share success stories, identify obstacles, and explore how the treaty can expedite global efforts against plastic pollution.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ben Boteler (RIFS) introduced the session with an overview of the increasing production of plastics and the various ongoing efforts to tackle the issue. He emphasised the growing awareness and actions taken in the WIO region and mentioned the launch in 2022 of negotiations for a new international, legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.

Luther Bois Anukur (IUCN) then gave an overview of the plastic problem, highlighting the multifaceted dimensions of plastic pollution. He mentioned that even though the WIO region is not a major producer, the region suffers from plastic pollution due to imports, and stressed the need for country-specific interventions, commending the increased efforts by governments, legislative bans, and community actions. He urged a shift to a circular economy mindset and emphasised the importance of collective voices in supporting a binding global plastics treaty.

A debate on the future global treaty discussed the added value of such a treaty, the related challenges and opportunities for African countries, the need for transparent data related to plastic production and consumption, and the importance of considering the unintended consequences of plastic reduction measures.

Forbi Perise (Sustainable Ocean Alliance) then presented grassroots actions against plastic pollution in Cameroon. The initiatives included school outreach, community clean-ups, and engagement projects like the Eco Soccer Championship. Forbi Perise stressed the importance of a global treaty in fast-tracking action against plastic pollution and addressing transboundary issues.

A panel discussion on regional and national efforts in the fight against plastic pollution followed, with **Sarah Pima** (Human Dignity and Environment Care Foundation, HUDEF, Tanzania), **Chris Whyte** (ACEN), **Paul de Bruyn** (Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, IOTC), and **Jared Bosire** (WIOSAP). The discussion covered various challenges and opportunities, such as e.g., the need to involve waste-pickers and create value for plastic waste, the importance of extended producer responsibility, the need for innovation in recycling, the importance of addressing the impact of plastic in fisheries, the need for harmonised methodologies and standards to set targets and monitor progress, and the value of regional cooperation in the WIO.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

The participants reflected on the massive challenge of plastic pollution, the need for strategic actions, and the importance of parallel initiatives. The ongoing international negotiations were highlighted as a crucial opportunity to address plastic pollution, with calls for a robust legally binding treaty and considerations for equitable solutions.

- There is an alarming growth in plastic production, that requires increasing awareness and actions at the regional level, along with the conclusion of robust international legally binding instrument.
- Despite being a minor producer, the WIO region faces plastic pollution due to imports, and the complexity and diversity of the situation calls for strengthened regional cooperation as well as country-specific interventions, such as legislative bans and community actions, and a global shift towards a circular economy.
- The future plastic treaty can be an effective tool if it compels states to act while addressing equity issues, considering the specific needs of African countries, and anticipating possible unintended consequences of plastic reduction measures.

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Session 3.4.

Conservation and sustainable use of high seas biodiversity: What's at stake in the Western Indian Ocean?

INTRODUCTION

After years of scientific debates, legal controversies and political wrangling, states have concluded an agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). This agreement enables the establishment of area-based management tools (ABMTs) for the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ, including MPAs. In this context, the coordination with existing organisations, including at the regional level, will be instrumental to establish effective high seas MPAs.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The session was opened by **Dixon Waruinge** (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) who set the scene and highlighted the interlinkages between the marine areas within and beyond national jurisdiction. Moderated by **Ben Boteler** (RIFS), the first part of the session was dedicated to the scientific aspects of high seas biodiversity, with **Kerry Sink** (SANBI) and **Francis Marsac** (IRD). Discussions emphasised the need for capacity development to study biodiversity in the high seas and focused on the opportunities the new treaty provides for MPAs. The interconnectedness of high seas biodiversity with areas within national jurisdiction was underlined, stressing the importance of stewardship and protective management. The economic importance of tuna fisheries in the WIO was also highlighted and the connectivity between ABNJ and exclusive economic zones discussed. The impact of human activities in ABNJ on migratory species was presented, as well as bycatch issues and the impacts of climate variability. Participants also discussed the potential impact of deep-sea mining on the tuna industry, the communication of the BBNJ related issues to non-fisheries ministers, and socio-economic considerations.

Minna Epps (IUCN) introduced the policy part of the session, mentioning that 83 states have signed the BBNJ Agreement so far and that 60 ratifications are required for its entry into force. A panel discussion followed, with **Dixon Waruinge** (Nairobi Convention Secretariat), **Paul de**

Bruyn (IOTC), **Cyrille Barnerias** (French Biodiversity Agency), **Ted Schmitt** (Allen Institute for AI, AI2), **Torsten Thiele** (Global Ocean Trust) and **Chrissant Barbe** (Department of Blue Economy, Seychelles). Discussions emphasised the integrated benefits of capacity building alongside the ratification process of the BBNJ Agreement. The role of regional collaboration, especially with existing organisations, was underlined, recognising the nuanced interaction between the new treaty and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). While the operationalisation of BBNJ has been agreed upon, the complexities of implementation and the necessity for thorough consultations were acknowledged. Collaborations between regional ocean governance organisations were discussed, highlighting the importance of defining processes at the secretariat level. Interregional collaboration was presented as a key strategy to identify best practices, foster partnerships, and monitor progress. The CBD's Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) and the support for MPAs were mentioned as crucial elements, emphasising information sharing and cooperation. The existence of a baseline of science for the BBNJ Agreement was acknowledged, signalling a foundation for initiating actions, with consideration for potential reviews of MPAs over time. Discussions also focused on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and technology to support the enforcement of the BBNJ Agreement through a strengthened monitoring, control, and surveillance of human activities at sea, as well as on financing needs and opportunities.

Last, the discussions highlighted the need for a prompt ratification of the BBNJ Agreement, with a video message from **Iziah Adekunle Salako**, Hon. Minister of State for Environment, Nigeria, and perspectives for the WIO region.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- Science shows the interlinkages and connectivity of high seas biodiversity and resources within and beyond national jurisdiction, thus calling for an integrated approach of ocean governance.
- The effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement will require a strong coordination between and among global and regional organisations, and interregional collaboration will be crucial to identify best practices, foster partnerships, and monitor progress.
- The use of artificial intelligence and the mobilisation of adequate funding will be also instrumental for the implementation of the treaty.
- Efforts to support the BBNJ Agreement ratification processes should go hand in hand with capacity building.

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Session 3.5.

Accelerating coastal and marine restoration in the Western Indian Ocean

INTRODUCTION

The post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) requires not only the development of networks of protected areas covering 30% of the terrestrial and marine areas by 2030 but also supports a global dynamic for the restoration of degraded ecosystems, with a specific target of at least 30% of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems under effective restoration by 2030. The following questions were explored in the session: How can regional collaboration in the WIO contribute to the implementation of this target? What are the success stories to build on? What are the challenges ahead?

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The session was opened by **Luther Bois Anukur** (IUCN) and started with a keynote presentation from **Jared Bosire** (WIOSAP) on the state of play and perspectives of ecosystems restoration. Jared Bosire underlined the various threats face by coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass, and the need for comprehensive management strategies. He discussed ecosystem restoration guidelines, regional policy support, and the importance of sustainable port development in the WIO. Last, he explored the role of mangroves and coral reefs in the blue economy sector and identified sustainable financing as a major challenge, focusing on funding streams and the role of local communities.

Participants then watched the film “Seagrass restoration in Maputo Bay^[11]” before a round-table was opened with **Mwita M. Mangora** (Western Indian Ocean Mangrove Network, WIOMN), **James Kairo** (Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Kenya), **Salomao Bandeira** (Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique), **Sadasing Oocheetsing** (Mauritius Institute of Oceanography) and **Abdoulaye Diagana** (Abidjan Convention Secretariat). The discussions focused on the lessons learnt from current restoration initiatives of mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs in the WIO.

Participants discussed the state of WIO mangroves, with human pressures as a major driver and opportunities for restoration, especially in Mozambique and Madagascar. They explored regional mangrove restoration tools, discussed policy considerations, and highlighted the need for well-framed questions at the local level. Participants also explored the ecosystem services provided by seagrass meadows and the beneficiaries of seagrass beds restoration. They discussed lessons learned from on-going initiatives — including the importance of addressing gender elements and involving women in seagrass-related livelihoods — and outlined future steps, including sustainability strategies and upscaling of success stories. Insights into coral restoration practices were then provided, including site selection, coral collection, coral nurseries, species selection, and land-based nurseries. Participants discussed issues related to data collection, monitoring, out-planting techniques, and the importance of community involvement for education, awareness, and participation. Discussions also focused on the interlinkage between ecosystems restoration and carbon monitoring, with examples of community-led blue carbon projects. Last, lessons learned from Western African initiatives were presented, both from the local and regional levels: the importance of community involvement from the earliest stage and the need for monitoring and evaluation in restoration initiatives were emphasised.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- A growing number of ecosystems restoration initiatives are currently underway in the WIO.
- Engaging local communities early in restoration efforts ensures community ownership, with special attention to gender considerations, particularly the role of women in livelihoods related to marine ecosystems.

[11] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I31Dp6lrmk>

- Employing a structured approach to restoration, including preplanning, design, implementation, and ongoing monitoring, is also crucial for tracking and ensuring the success of restoration initiatives.
- Monitoring carbon, particularly through community-led blue carbon projects, provides a tangible metric for valuing and addressing the degradation of marine ecosystems.

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The implementing global goals at regional level room



Ben Boteler, Research Institute for Sustainability



Frank Mirobo, WIO-ECRN, taking notes

Strand 4: Regional Ocean governance.

The Nairobi Convention is in the process of developing a Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the WIO to contribute to and support the continental process of working towards more effective ocean governance arrangements. In this strand, sessions explored how to develop a strategy in an inclusive way, what other regions can learn from this process and what other regions could share with the WIO in terms of institutional arrangements and financing mechanisms. The strand also touched on the progress of the parallel process of developing an information management strategy (IMS) in the WIO. To help ensure clarity and delivery of session goals, interaction among participants, and alignment across strand sessions, Dominic Stucker, and Mai ElAshmawy of the Collective Leadership Institute (CLI), supported co-chairs in this strand in facilitating their respective sessions.

Session 4.1

Inclusivity in regional ocean governance for collective implementation

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the WIO region has been under development through a participatory approach, aiming to ensure that state and non-state actors are fully engaged in the process. The multi-stakeholder ROGS Task Force was nominated by the focal points of the Nairobi Convention and led this process. This session provided an opportunity for participants to share experiences of stakeholder engagement and to reflect on how to ensure inclusivity of underrepresented groups — such as local communities, women, youth, and small-scale fishers — in the co-implementation of the ROGS.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Timothy Andrew (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) opened the session by explaining what inclusion means in the context of regional ocean governance, how to ensure voices are heard in the processes and implementation of activities and why this is key to successful impact. The ROGS is based on work from a multi-disciplinary task force drawn from the region that includes governments and experts. He talked about the challenges that those involved in the ROGS process had to overcome to include local communities and private sector actors. He said that the outcomes from this session will be useful to include in the preamble of the ROGS.

Hadley Becha (Community Action for Nature Conservation, CANCO Kenya) explained that all coastal communities have environmental and economic rights within ocean governance. Coastal communities are heterogeneous in terms of geography, gender, and socioeconomic status. Community engagement must be a planned process, not just a meeting with a list of participants. Inclusivity and community engagement must consider the rights of citizens, transparency, accountability, the right of information, and whether the communities are empowered to manage the changes.

Flower Msuya (University of Dar es Salaam) made a case for involving women in ocean decision-making through the example of seaweed farming. She pointed out that 80% of seaweed farmers in East Africa are women and women make up most of the stakeholders of the seaweed industry through their role in the farming, processing, and trading of seaweed.

Salim Ali (South West Indian Ocean Tuna Forum, SWIOTUNA) explained why it is important to involve small-scale fishers in ocean management and governance, such as in MSP. Small-scale

fishers are involved in research processes, but the result of this research is rarely disseminated to coastal communities. He highlighted that there is the need for a cohesive message from the numerous government agencies that is clearly communicated to communities.

In discussions, participants mentioned that putting in place a network of protected areas and working with local communities will lead to better catch results, while protecting the environment. Participants also indicated that many projects are designed by researchers and the government and fail to include communities in the design part of the process.

Ghaamid Hatibu (WIO Early Career Scientist Network) made the case for involving young professionals and intergenerational collaboration for ocean management and governance. Young professionals are innovative and bring fresh ideas and input. They can play a role in the conservation and management of resources through storytelling, showcasing novel ways of inclusion and can highlight intergenerational perspectives.

One participant asked for tips on how to interact with other young people on the ground to make changes in fisheries and it was recommended to become involved in youth biodiversity networks or providing environmental education at schools.

In self-selected groups facilitated by volunteers, participants generated and presented the following clustered results to three key inclusivity-related questions:

Question #1: Which actors — from across sectors, levels, and societal groups — are essential to include for co-implementation of the ROGS?

DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL PARTNERS	PRIVATE SECTOR	GOVERNMENT	CIVIL SOCIETY
Development partners	Coastal Hostels	Fisheries, shipping, oil and gas, environment	Local and coastal communities x 4
Development agencies	Fisheries, processors, shipping, oil and gas	National, Provincial and Local spheres of government	Artisanal fishers
Financiers	Private sector x2	Support government representatives	NGO's, CBO's
		There needs also be national political will	Faith based organizations
CROSS CUTTING	SECURITY ACTORS	MEDIA	RESEARCH / ACADEMY
Women x2, men, youth	Navy, coast guards	Media actors	Researchers
Regional and international actors			Research institutions
			Science

In onward discussions, one participant pointed out the important role of academia and particularly a multi-disciplinary approach to research and capacity enhancement.

Question #2: How can we increase meaningful inclusion of these key actors in co-implementation of the ROGS?

INCLUSION, PARTICIPATION & CONSULTATION	CAPACITY BUILDING & EXCHANGE	RESOURCES	COLLECTIVE ACTION APPROACH
Continue participatory approach	capacity building, interconnectedness at various scales	Empower actors by providing capitals	Invest time, patience in process, relationships
Continue stakeholders consultations	Training and knowledge sharing	Create budget stream with the participation of Govt	Each actor should have a role to participate and contribute
Participatory marine spatial planning	Exchange of information between authorities and fishers	Define benefits and put policies and resources in place to support initiatives	Get the key actors more involved in the policy making and decision making process
Listen to regional CEO voice alongside national voice	Value local institutions and local knowledge	Improve technology incl. AI	Enhance collective leadership
Work with CSO networks		Improve technology transfer	Hold regular meetings, consultations
Involve traditional leaders		Mainstream local cultures into ROGS	Move beyond "Project" to "partnership" mentality

To ensure meaningful inclusion, participants emphasised the crosscutting need to tailor the language and mode of communication to different audiences given that the actors identified above speak different languages and work at different levels.

Question #3: How can we help balance power differences among these key actors to ensure that more marginal voices can be amplified and respectfully integrated into co-implementation of the ROGS?

FRAMEWORKS	FINANCING	CONSULTATIVE PROCESS /PARTICIPATORY APPROACH / LANGUAGE & CULTURE
Institutional Frameworks to enable to sustainable coordinate and regulate	Co-financing community programs	Strengthen existing or create new platforms for aggregating voices of marginalized groups
science to policy processes to establish a nexus...	Self sustained projects by the community should be encouraged while the state provides the necessary support	Communicate sector interdependency
segment the actors into groups of their own based on different responsibilities	Moving beyond piloting	Science to policy processes to establish nexus...
Collaborate & work as one entity, the laws should be clear, everyone should be sensitized on it	Cost / benefit sharing	Involve all genders through meetings, discussions, exchanges
	CAPACITY BUILDING	Everyone should feel equal as "partners"
	training and capacity building at all levels	Involve multi stakeholders in all phases of implementation
	Capacity development — meaningful and targeted	Careful on who design which project and for what purpose
	Capacity building that integrated trust-building, shared visioning	Work in local languages
		Dissemination findings at all levels

Before the session closed, **Sam Petersen** (WWF) offered some concluding thoughts. She highlighted the challenges of ensuring meaningful engagement with coastal communities and the importance of including a diversity of voices in ocean policy for transparency and accountability.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- A participatory process is important when developing ocean governance strategies to ensure credibility, ownership, and contextual relevance.
- When engaging with coastal communities, there needs to be a common understanding of expectations and a clear engagement strategy.
- When engaging in multi-stakeholder processes and with coastal communities, patience is important. Collaboration methodologies, the type of engagement processes, and trusting relationships matter.

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Session 4.2

Sharing the ROGS Process with the WIO and Beyond

INTRODUCTION

The process of developing the ROGS in the WIO can provide inspiration and guidance for other regions seeking to develop regional ocean governance mechanisms. This session provided space to exchange on lessons, methodologies, and partnerships, showcasing good practices and innovative approaches both in the WIO and other large marine ecosystems (LMEs).

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

After the session was opened by the co-chairs, a joint keynote input on “The development of the Western Indian Ocean Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS)” was made by **Dominic Stucker** (Collective Leadership Institute), **Kieran Kelleher** (ROGS advisor), and **Gina Bonne** (Indian Ocean Commission).

Dominic Stucker explained the process of developing the ROGS and its participatory nature through the dedicated task force. Kieran Kelleher provided further detail on the content of the strategy. The task force identified regional priorities that the ROGS addresses through four clusters of topics:

- 1) maritime security,
- 2) blue economy,
- 3) environment and natural resources, and
- 4) knowledge management and science.

The task force also identified which actors could take a leadership role in terms of implementation, financing, and resourcing. He explained the importance of learning from other regions to address challenges in a functional and efficient manner.

Gina Bonne shared lessons learned during the ROGS development process involving a multi-actor task force comprising state and non-state country representatives and representatives of the regional economic communities, the Indian Ocean Commission, the African Union, and others to provide an inclusive forum for stakeholder dialogue and collaboration. She emphasised a political mandate is needed to develop a ROGS, and members need to feel invested in the process to be committed.

Claudette Briere Spiteri (Global Environment Facility's International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network, GEF IW:LEARN) explained the role of LMEs in advancing regional ocean governance and building partnerships. She highlighted the importance of LMEs in fostering strategic collaborations and strengthening governance from the regional to the local level.

Christopher Corbin (Cartagena Convention) moderated a panel discussion among representatives from other regions including Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, Regional Communities and Commissions and LME practitioners on the challenges, best practices and lessons learned in the WIO and other regions:

Providing insights from the Benguela Current Commission (BCC), **Thandiwe Gxaba** (BCC) shared steps taken in Angola, Namibia, and South Africa, including the use of MSP. The BCC has developed transboundary plans for MPAs through a consultative process. Lessons learned included the difficulty of harmonising policies, resolving intersectoral conflicts, the different mandates across ministries in different countries and regional priorities are not necessarily national priorities. The BCC has engaged youth ambassadors for activities undertaken at the national and regional level. They have also adopted a gender policy and action plan.

Aboubacar Sidibé (Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem, CCLME) discussed the importance of an inclusive and participatory mechanism and a dynamic science-policy interface for decision-makers and stakeholders and shared some lessons learned from the ROGS co-development process in the CCLME area, including the establishment of the Ecosystem Working Group for the reinforcement of scientific knowledge and evidence. He emphasised the key challenge in the region is of a financial nature and why communication about progress, impact and added value is important.

Abdoulaye Diagana (Abidjan Convention Secretariat) mentioned the challenge in the Abidjan Convention area of relying on projects to facilitate activities. He advised participants to talk to policymakers in their language to get them involved and engaged. In the Abidjan Convention area, they are developing a blue economy strategy for the region, exploring possibilities of youth ambassadors to amplify communication and how to better mobilise funds for implementation.

Mahesh Pradhan (Coordinating Body of the Seas of East Asia, COBSEA) said more efforts can be invested to link current policies to the triple planetary crisis. He said we need a new ecosystem framework that includes Marine Spatial Planning, MPAs with a link to habitats.

Lorna Inness (IOC-UNESCO, IOCARIBE) highlighted some lessons learned including the benefits of mainstreaming joint action in intergovernmental mechanisms.

Participants debated on the best path forward, including the need to balance regional action with national sovereignty. Looking at examples from other regions, they discussed the viability of having an apex decision-making body in the WIO for better regional decision-making. Panelists and participants spoke on the importance of political mandates and political will in the process of ROGS, and the potential of regional mechanisms to cohesively bring together and complement the different national strategies. During the session, participants contributed responses to six key questions posed by co-chairs:

1. How can regional ocean governance strategies inform and inspire the implementation of continental and global ocean governance strategies?
 - At conceptualisation stage, they must be established in alignment with continental and global policy decisions and frameworks so that there is no contradiction.
 - Development of regional ocean governance strategies (as in the WIO) can be conducted in a participatory and multi-stakeholder manner, drawing out collective intelligence and innovative ideas that can inspire other regions.
2. How can regional ocean governance support inclusive and sustainable blue economies?
 - Through mobilising technical and financial support for the activities in various blue economy thematic areas.
 - Effective ocean governance can create a foundation and enabling environment for blue economies across the WIO.
3. How can national political will for collective implementation of regional ocean governance be enhanced, aligned, and prioritised?
 - Through endorsing high-level critical decisions and creating an enabling environment for their implementation, including funding and capacity.
 - By recognising that national mandates and priorities on the ocean can best be fulfilled by leading change collectively with all other WIO countries.
4. How can we best facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue, collaboration, and credible decision-making for strengthening collective implementation of ocean governance strategies?
 - By active participation in COPs, regional meetings, national consultations, etc.
 - By fundamentally valuing and investing time and energy in high quality engagement, dialogue, and collaboration across stakeholder groups as the most robust way for delivering on ocean governance. Decision-making must be transparent and devolved to the most appropriate level (where expertise and experience best match the types of decisions needed) to be credible.
5. How can coastal states collectively secure greater benefits from improved fisheries governance by the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs)?
 - By strengthening tools such as Marine Spatial Planning and Marine Domain Awareness for better protection and utilisation of fisheries resources.
6. How can best practices on ocean governance effectively be shared among regions, adapted, and applied?
 - In the WIO, through WIOMSA Symposia. Across regions through meetings of the Regional Seas and the Marine Regions Forum, whether in-person or online. Through best practice platforms, such as Panorama¹².

Finally, Claudette Briere Spiteri shared a short video on the Collaborative Systems Mapping of Sustainable Pathways (CoSMoS)¹³ tool.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- A regional ocean governance strategy is a continuous process that can include different methods of cooperation such as various sorts of task forces and working groups.
- The regional ocean governance strategy is not an instruction manual, but a facilitating document that provides a framework for discussion, collaboration, and joint implementation. It guides stakeholders what to do at intersections among sectors at the subregional and national level.

[12] <https://panorama.solutions/en/portal/panorama-blue>

[13] <https://vimeo.com/880099785/c340b9a656?share=copy>

- Developing a regional ocean governance strategy requires money, technical resources and finding common areas of agreement, such as the ocean as a shared resource.
- It is important to be clear about the mandate and to garner sufficient political will because all agencies have mandates but are not always consistent and cohesive. The mandate helps bring a fragmented region together.
- The process should be as inclusive and participatory as possible.
- Considering different views from different sectors is of high importance to the success of regional ocean governance strategies.
- Collaboration is key in a context where there might not be many human and financial resources to manage regional ocean governance strategies.
- An implementation and monitoring plan to measure progress of regional ocean governance strategies is helpful to ensure that all areas are implemented with clearly defined targets and indicators.

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Regional ocean governance workshop sessions

Session 4.3

The WIO Information Management Strategy: Critical Support for the ROGS

INTRODUCTION

In parallel to the development of the ROGS in the WIO, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat is creating an information management strategy (IMS). Information and data will provide critical support for the successful implementation of the ROGS. Thus, it is important to ensure that the two processes are aligned. The information management strategy will: 1) identify sources of reliable data that can inform decision-making, 2) identify the data gaps, and 3) provide a guide for ensuring that data is accessible and policy relevant. This session has opened discussions on these technical issues to non-data specialists and has explored how the IMS can facilitate coordination between data providers and deliver policy-relevant information for decision-makers.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

In his opening speech **Dixon Waruinge** (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) emphasised the crucial need for a collaborative data processing system in the region. The focus was on establishing a clearing-house mechanism that goes beyond mere storage, aiming to facilitate the extraction of valuable products and information from the data. The proposed Information Management Strategy (IMS) should be designed to be multisectoral, ensuring accessibility while supporting accountability and compliance. Inclusivity is a key principle, with a specific mention of incorporating indigenous data and crediting the communities from which it is sourced. The integration of the WIO platform into the existing clearing-house mechanism was discussed, and the process involves assigning clear roles to various stakeholders, with a designated individual to drive the process forward within specified timelines. This comprehensive approach sets the stage for a systematic and inclusive IMS tailored to the marine region's needs.

Ken Findlay (Global Ocean Accounts Partnership, GOAP, Africa Community of Practice) emphasised that ocean values and the integration of different approaches in valuing the ocean is not well-understood. Absolute values are less useful than changes in relative value. It is important to develop scenarios and models that can feed directly into policy development and balance anthropogenic use of the ocean.

David Dyer (AfriSeas Solutions (Pty) Ltd) explained what ocean accounts are and how to look at the value of the ocean beyond GDP. Ocean accounts can underpin the ocean management of governments.

During the discussions, participants indicated that ocean accounts are complex and that countries need to pick and fit a selection of the components that they are interested in or in need of. The point is to look at components in the framework and identify change. Participants also discussed how to build on existing bodies, include different languages and make sure there is sufficient understanding. They also discussed whether there is a need for a more extensive communication strategy.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- The need for political will, a clear mandate, and continuous capacities in coordinating regional processes.
- The importance of a co-creation process through, for example, a working group, physical meetings, and clear role assignments.
- Regional consensus and ownership, along with country participation, are enabling factors for mainstreaming the IMS into national planning processes.
- Continuous efforts and a long-term approach are emphasised for the successful development and implementation of the strategy.
- The IMS is an information system, not a data system, meaning that no raw data will be added but analysed information.

- The IMS should play a crucial role in informing the ROGS by addressing the evolving dynamics of the human-ocean nexus.
- IMS can help enhance the role of the ROGS in decision-making and can identify key areas of missing information and track progress through shared information.
- As ocean values are inherently complex, the IMS must emphasise on integrating diverse approaches to valuing the ocean, recognising the need to account for changes and prioritise relative values over absolute metrics.
- In the context of changing ocean sciences, the IMS should focus on collecting and disseminating information that can be seamlessly integrated into models and ocean accounts.

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Session 4.4

ROGS Institutional Arrangements: Who does what, when and how?

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) for the Western Indian Ocean region will include an implementation plan. However, determining an appropriate governance structure and how to allocate tasks and responsibilities is a significant challenge as there is no single authority that includes all relevant sectors. The mandate of the Nairobi Convention is focused on environmental issues, with other organisations managing commercial activities, such as fishing and shipping. The region is also covered by four regional economic communities (RECs) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). This session explored what kind of institutional arrangements and regional leadership is necessary to implement the ROGS.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Alex Benkenstein (South African Institute of International Affairs) provided a word of introduction after which **Jean-Paul Adam** (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, United Nations Secretariat) spoke to participants in a video message.

Gina Bonne (Indian Ocean Commission) elaborated on the WIO ROGS' planned governance structures. She indicated there will be institutional arrangements composed of three platforms (policy, blue finance, and technical). The voices of all communities of practice will be involved in these platforms. For the policy platform, the African Union Commission, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) are the proposed hosts with a rotating chair amongst the Regional Economic Communities. The Nairobi Convention Secretariat and UNECA are the envisioned hosts for the technical advisory platform.

A panel composed of **Mahesh Pradhan** (COBSEA), **Thandiwe Gxaba** (Benguela Current Convention, BCC) and **Christopher Corbin** (Cartagena Convention Secretariat) provided insights from other regions on integrated ocean governance. Christopher Corbin emphasised that the Regional Seas Organisations evolve over time and that a reoccurring challenge is to bring private sector parties to the table.

Through a participant survey, participants identified some best practices for institutional arrangements for ocean governance in the WIO, namely creating continental platforms for overall guidance, having a Presidential champion, ensure political support through Regional Economic Communities and making use of existing platforms, knowledge, and expertise.

A second panel composed of **Georges Mba-Asseko** (African Union), **Sibongile Mavimbela** (Southern African Development Community, SADC), **Tim Andrew** (Nairobi Convention Secretariat) and **Yvonne Waweru** (GIZ) looked at how the WIO ROGS institutional arrangements plan can be refined. During discussions participants questioned how a new ocean governance structure can be embedded in existing systems, e.g., how can the WIO ROGS be hosted by the AU considering decisions at AU level have to be made by all states on the continent? Participants also wondered how the policy platform will make sure global commitments are met regionally. For the financing of the ROGS, some participants suggested using regional banks. Others suggested ensuring there is a mechanism to bring states on board and to have joint reporting obligations from countries.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- The Nairobi Convention Secretariat mandate to develop the ROGS comes from the member states, but the suggestions on the ROGS institutional arrangements currently do not include states directly (but through regional organisations where states are represented). This is something that should be addressed for future implementation of the ROGS.
- There are multiple frameworks and strategies in the region, so thinking about the implementation of the ROGS should focus on how to use existing efforts to take Africa forward.
- Different regional economic communities and IOC are keen to play a role in the implementation of the ROGS. Therefore, it is useful to see how to use existing mechanisms, for example, SADC can support the ROGS by providing technical support and resource mobilisation.

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Session 4.5

Financing and Resourcing the ROGS

INTRODUCTION

This session reflected on funding opportunities and how the WIO's Regional Ocean Governance Strategy (ROGS) can connect these with projects on the ground. The financing challenge is that there are many initiatives looking to finance projects, but the middle ground or connectivity is lacking. Current approaches for funding are piecemeal with limited coordination. There are possibilities to leverage funding from multilateral institutions. Private financing is also promising, as there is a clear appetite to invest in the region; however, there are challenges in developing and presenting bankable projects. There is also a need to make the business case for investment in the ROGS to finance ministers.

PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

After introductory remarks from **Samantha Petersen** (WWF) and **Aboud Jumbe** (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar), **Kieran Kelleher** (ROGS advisor) told participants about the progress in developing a Blue Finance Architecture for implementation of the ROGS. He emphasised that a regional approach to demanding finance could improve access, but it requires careful evaluation to address national financing gaps and replicate successful models. Kieran Kelleher further explained that the supply of WIO blue finance faces challenges. National public financing is scarce due to a weak tax base and high public debt. Commercial finance is costly due to a weak tax base and high public debt. Commercial finance is costly due to interest, inflation, and risk factors. The enabling environment is weak with issues like reporting and transparency. The financing approach is mostly project-by-project, although there are some attempts at pooled finance and regional projects, with varying degrees of success. Major shortfalls come from the private sector part in financing the blue economy. Individually financed projects face high transaction costs and integration challenges with other initiatives, hindering effective assessment and impact attribution. Co-benefits are often inadequately reflected in evaluations.

Samantha Petersen provided a blue economy perspective on financing the ROGS and talked about the great value the ocean has for economies as well as society. WWF has published a report identifying “*Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles*”. They are currently investigating whether the investors in the WIO region respect these principles. She also mentioned that community enterprises are often small-scale, so it is harder to mobilise finance for them. Incubator programmes, such as seed investment, business planning and capacity-building can help them unlock larger sources of sustainable finance.

Sibongile Mavimbela (SADC) highlighted that due to capacity constraints, many organisations do not have the expertise to assess available resources and outsource the proposal development to those who do not necessarily know the needs of the country.

Cecilia Torres (Blue Action Fund) spoke about the challenge in the WIO to absorb large funding and for organisations to tick all the requirements for funding. **Valerie Hickey** (World Bank) highlighted that money is spent on many activities that undermine sustainability, such as fisheries subsidies. She said there needs to be a shift from individual capacity-building to institutional strength. Greening/blueing the financial sector cannot be done through voluntary principles. It is better to focus on central and local banks to regulate the financial sector.

During the session, participants offered rich inputs on the question: “What are your top ideas for how financing partners could enhance alignment and collaboration in the WIO for regional ocean governance?”. Participants responded that:

- WIO states can harmonise policies, balance regional priorities, and collectively lead marine interventions.
- Finance partners can establish an overarching fund for pooling ocean governance resources and ensure that financed activities are embedded in the WIO context and complement one another. They can also promote innovative financing.

- Practitioners can 1) build capacity for institutional strength and for co-designing integrated projects that can attract funding at scale, 2) adopt an inclusive, results-oriented, and multi-stakeholder collaboration approach, 3) promote exchange on and application of best practices and 4) measure progress to demonstrate compliance, profitability and return on investments.

Aboud Jumbe (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar) provided some closing remarks and said the push for new sources of funding are inevitable as traditional sources of financing projects are inadequate. He mentioned the usefulness of non-political inclusive fora like the Marine Regions Forum to make progress at a regional level.

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY MESSAGES

- Challenges in blue finance include creating an enabling policy environment, community involvement, enhancing the role of commercial banks, and addressing sustainability and project impacts. Blending financing, ensuring ownership, and building capacity are also hurdles.
- Solutions involve engaging with financial facilities like the World Bank to support ocean conservation through investable programmes, which is not yet successfully mainstreamed on a smaller scale and need acceleration.
- A blue taxonomy can highlight where funding should be going. It can provide a structure to prioritise and guide sustainable investments (green taxonomy applied to the ocean).
- Link investments to impact. Ocean accounts can help standardise reporting and track impact.
- Efforts should focus on multi-year and multi-country funding as the ocean suffers from transboundary impacts.
- Large organisations can access funds because of their capacity to write proposals but there needs to be a string attached — they need to support a local organisation. They need to get support on e.g., writing a financial report.
- Secretariats of regional bodies need to be mobilised to access funding to support the countries.

SESSION COORDINATORS	Klaudija Cremers Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, IDDRI
	Dominic Stucker Collective Leadership Institute, CLI
CO-CHAIRS	Samantha Petersen World Wide Fund for Nature, WWF
	Simeao Lopes ProAzul
RAPPORTEURS	Shannon Hampton Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS
	Hamza Buqaileh Research Institute for Sustainability, RIFS

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Dominic Stucker, CLI, addressing the regional ocean governance workshop room

IISD/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou



Thandiwe Gxaba, Benguela Current Convention addressing the room

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Sibongile Mavimbela, SADC; Cecilia Torres, Blue Action Fund and Valerie Hickey, World Bank on panel in regional ocean governance workshop.

5 CONCURRENT ACTIVITIES

Art exhibit

Nyika Mbari Consults presented the *Marine Regions Forum Art Exhibition*. A selection of ocean-inspired artwork was exhibited at the venue and available for purchase during the conference. Nyika Mbari Consults is a creative and strategic growth management business operating under the not-for-profit and for-profit model offering professional management operation service for creative and literary projects in Tanzania.



IISD/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou



IISD/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou



IISD/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou

Examples of art work on display at the Marine Regions Forum 2023

Launchpad

The Launchpad, before dinner on Wednesday, 8 November 2023, was designed to be a celebration of new and ongoing initiatives in the WIO. WWF and their partners showcased their Northern Mozambique Channel project which is working in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat through three work packages, one of which focuses on working towards regionally cohesive Marine Spatial Planning (NoCaMo project^[14]). Then, we celebrated the launch of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Network (WIOMPAN^[15]) and heard feedback on their knowledge sharing workshop that took place back-to-back with the Marine Regions Forum. This was followed by a celebration of 30 years of WIOMSA^[16], and the launch of the booklet “30 Years of WIOMSA”, which reflects on the Swedish Government’s three decades of support for the advancement of marine science in the WIO region. Finally, there was a high energy launch of the Our Blue Futures^[17] Transformation Network which highlighted their numerous and diverse partners, encouraging others to participate in Our Blue Futures.

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Celebrating 30 years of WIOMSA at the launchpad

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Launch of the WIO Marine Protected Area Network, WIOMPAN



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Launchpad and dinner event

[14] <https://www.nairobiconvention.org/northern-mozambique-channel-project/>

[15] <https://wiomsa.org/wiompnan/>

[16] <https://blog.wiomsa.net/2024/02/01/30-years-of-wiomsa-taking-stock-of-30-years-of-swedish-government-support-to-wiomsa/>

[17] <https://our-blue-future.org/>

Photo competition

We could not visit all the countries in the region, or the other regions that are present in the conference, and therefore a photo competition was run to bring some of the diverse coastal environments to the Marine Regions Forum. The competition was open to the public and advertised on the Marine Regions Forum's and WIOMSA's websites and social media channels. There were 43 photos submitted and 23 of these were short-listed and uploaded on to the conference app where participants were able to vote for their favourites. The winners were announced at the barbeque on the final day of the conference and awarded book prizes that were donated by WIOMSA.



First Prize: **EMBRACING THE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF THE OCEAN**, Frank Mirobo



Second Prize: **SOMANGA, KILWA DISTRICT, TANZANIA**, Tanguy Nicolas

Early Career Professional sessions

Co-led by **Frank Mirobo** (Western Indian Ocean — Early Career Researchers' Network, WIO-ECRN) and **Luise von Pogrell** (TMG — ThinkTank for Sustainability), the early career professionals (ECPs) convened three times during the conference, attracting over 20 participants. The first meeting focused on introductions, the second on discussions about conference highlights, and the third involved preparing an ECP representative, **Kareen Andriantsferana** (WWF), for representing the group in the closing panel, "Shaping the path ahead".

The meetings created an opportunity to connect with peers, and report back from the diverse sessions they attended. It was also set up as a space to form a collective, and thus more impactful voice during the conference. Key points emerging from the discussions included the early career professionals' desire to be integral to conversations from the outset and increased representation on panels and in sessions. The ECPs recognised their role in shaping a conducive environment, suggesting strategies like introducing each other to senior colleagues and identifying supporters among the senior colleagues to use their influence to secure ECPs' seats at the table.

The ECPs furthermore highlighted actionable points for senior colleagues, such as

- create spaces for ECP voices,
- provide invitations to conferences and actively engage ECPs in discussions,
- seek interactions with ECP and be accessible for conversations,
- provide support through encouragement and constructive feedback, and
- ensure continuity of research positions and funding.

IIED/ENB | Anastasia Rodopoulou



Early career research professionals

6 APPENDIX

Conference agenda

	MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023	TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023	WEDNESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2023	THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023
08:00— 09:00		REGISTRATION with welcome coffee		
09:00— 10:00		Registra- tion con- tinues	Funders and host photo	
10:00— 11:00		WELCOME TO the Marine Regions Forum	PARALLEL TOPICAL STRAND WORKSHOPS including coffee break	PARALLEL TOPICAL STRAND WORKSHOPS including coffee break
11:00— 12:00		PLENARY 1 Building a shared understanding		
12:00— 13:00		Group Photo		
13:00— 14:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14:00— 15:00			PARALLEL TOPICAL STRAND WORKSHOPS	PARALLEL TOPICAL STRAND WORKSHOPS
15:00— 16:00		PARALLEL TOPICAL STRAND WORKSHOPS including coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break
16:00— 17:00			PLENARY 2 Inclusivity and Innovation in ocean governance	PLENARY 3 Shaping the path ahead
17:00— 18:00		Early Career Professionals' catch up	Early Career Professionals' catch up	
18:00— 19:00	EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION AND ICE BREAKER			
19:00— 20:00				
20:00— 21:00		CONFERENCE DINNER	EVENING RECEPTION AND LAUNCHPAD	FAREWELL BARBEQUE
21:00— 22:00				

Partners, and participants

PARTNERS AND CO-CHAIRS OF THE MARINE REGIONS FORUM 2023

The Marine Regions Forum 2023 would not have been possible without the engagement, input, and support of many partners to whom we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude.



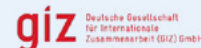
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Ministry of the Environment and Energy



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



PARTICIPANTS OF THE MARINE REGIONS FORUM 2023

Participation for the Marine Regions Forum 2023 conference was by invitation only. The Marine Regions Forum follows an established selection procedure and by-invitation-only practice to ensure a fair distribution of participants across topics, countries, regions, organisations, and gender. The selection and number of participants was managed by the coordinating team in close cooperation and regular iteration with the Steering Group, the Advisory Board, and the host countries, and particularly with the partners and co-chairs to enable participants to contribute to workshop sessions and interact with each other in a meaningful way. In a few cases, self-nominated applications for participation were accepted.

Funded participation was limited to those from the DAC list of ODA¹⁸ recipients with an emphasis on participation from the WIO region (58% of participants). Funding was also sourced for participants from the Republic of Seychelles. There were 183 participants, including the coordinating team, coming from 38 different countries of the world, and 66% of whom were male and 34% female. Participants were from, in descending order, governments, research and researchers, non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations, foundations and industry. A list of participating organisations is provided on page 90.



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[18] <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

The Marine Regions Forum Team

COORDINATING TEAM

The Marine Regions Forum 2023 was coordinated by the Marine Regions Forum project team from Research Institute for Sustainability — Helmholtz Centre Potsdam (RIFS), the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), TMG Think Tank for Sustainability together with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat.

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		Madisen Dimacale	
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	TMG — Think Tank for Sustainability www.tmg-thinktank.co	Alexander Müller	
		Luise von Pogrell	
	Nairobi Convention Secretariat www.nairobiconvention.org	Dixon Waruinge	
		Timothy Andrew	

STEERING GROUP OF THE MARINE REGIONS FORUM

Timothy Andrew	United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi Convention Secretariat
Cyrille Barnerias	French Biodiversity Agency
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Charlotte Gobin	European Commission
Raphaël Goulet	Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission
Catarina Hedar	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
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ADVISORY BOARD OF THE MARINE REGIONS FORUM

Adnan Awad	United Nations Development Programme
Joseph Appiott	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
Julian Barbière	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization — Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
Jessica Battle	World Wide Fund for Nature
Meg Caldwell	David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Darius Campbell	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
Maria Damanaki	The Nature Conservancy
Abdoulaye Diagana	Abidjan Convention Secretariat
David Freestone	Sargasso Sea Commission
Kristina Gjerde	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Fredrik Haag	International Maritime Organization
Lorna Inniss	IOC-UNESCO, IOCARIBE
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Dire Tladi	University of Pretoria
Arthur Tuda	Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association
Osvaldo Urrutia	Faculty of Law, P. Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
Martin Visbeck	GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

SUSTAINABILITY NOTES

The Marine Regions Forum team acknowledges that bringing people from across the world to an in-person event creates environmental impact. We consider the benefits of meaningful interaction and in-person participation to be significant enough to warrant this.

The conference programme and any supporting information was shared on the website and in the dedicated conference app to avoid additional printing. We aimed to use as little single-use materials as possible, for example, the lanyards were unbranded in the hope that they can be reused. We limited single use branding while trying to still have a visible presence in the hotel. We asked the hotel to provide water dispenses in meeting rooms and encouraged participants to bring a reusable water bottle to reduce the need for frequent washing of glasses. Similarly, we chose a hotel that uses large format soap dispensers in the rooms. Because there was no way to guarantee that any fish or seafood was caught sustainably, we asked the hotel to not include this in the meals and to prioritise vegetarian options. We also asked the conference hotel to not to use straws to limit single use plastic.

We prioritised local vendors for a positive impact on the local economy in Dar es Salaam.

DISCLAIMER

Statements, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this report were made by participants at the Marine Regions Forum 2023. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of the conference organisers, funders (European Union, the Government of Sweden, the German Government and the Nairobi Convention Secretariat), partners and hosts, or represent common views of the workshop participants.

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Acknowledgements

The Marine Regions Forum team would like to thank everyone for being part of the conference. We are grateful for the host countries for welcoming the Marine Regions Forum to the region, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Seychelles, and here particularly to **Wankyo Simon** and **Magdalena Gerald Ngotolainyo** for facilitating the engagement with the United Republic of Tanzania and to **Nanette Laure** and **Catherina Bonnelame** for facilitating engagement in the Republic of Seychelles.

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We would also like to thank the local organising support team from the **Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)** and **Empower Limited** who's support was invaluable, and always on the spot, particularly to **Lilian Omolo**, **Miranda Naiman**, **Ella Naiman**, **Cecilia Mlenga**, **Neema Hakim**, and **Mayur Nayi**.

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A special thanks to **Pradeep Singh**, Fellow at the RIFS, who became an essential part of the Marine Regions Forum team for the conference, and to **Leonie vom Eigen** for her support before the conference during her internship at RIFS.

We are grateful to **Nyika Mbari Consults** for curating an exhibition of ocean inspired art that brightened the venue, and to the **Muzingoma Dance** performance for entertainment at the conference dinner.

Further, we would like to extend our thanks to the team of the conference hotel, the **Ramada Resort by Wyndham in Dar Es Salaam**, Tanzania, who provide a perfect setting for the Marine Regions Forum 2023 and made everything possible to accommodate our wishes and requirements.

Back-to-Back Events

THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN MARINE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK (WIOMPAN) KNOWLEDGE SHARING WORKSHOP

1–4 November 2023, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

WIOMPAN, with support from WIOMSA and other partners, organised an exchange-learning workshop to discuss Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and Community Managed Areas (CMA) challenges in the WIO region and develop programs and projects to improve management effectiveness. In-person learning workshops allow MPA and CMA managers and stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences. Managers shared experiences to prioritise management and capacity needs among WIO countries to help partners develop programs that address MPA and CMA management needs and challenges hinder regional collaboration and meeting the GBF goals.

REGIONAL MSP FORUM FOR AFRICA

5–6 November 2023, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

The Updated MSP Roadmap, a joint initiative by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) and the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission to accelerate Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) processes worldwide, identified an action to “build a network of Regional MSP forums and Platforms” together with interested regional institutions working on MSP. In Africa, all Regional Seas that have African parties are engaged in MSP initiatives: the Abidjan Convention Secretariat, the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (Barcelona Convention) and the Regional Organisation for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (Jeddah Convention). Besides, the African Union Blue Economy Strategy urged Member States to institutionalise MSP to allocate specific spaces for maritime activities and ecosystem conservation. It is within this context of multiple interconnected initiatives that the institutions above-mentioned decided to join forces and co-organise the 2nd MSP forum for Africa.

BUILDING A COMMITMENT FOR REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY ALIGNED MSP PROCESSES BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN THE NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL (NMC) REGION

9 November 2023, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

This event was co-organised by the Nairobi Convention Secretariat, WWF and partners involved in the Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Resources of the Northern Mozambique Channel (NoCaMo) project. It focused on building awareness of the Northern Mozambique Channel region and explored ways to move toward a regionally and nationally aligned MSP processes, with the aim to deliver long-term optimisation and increased protection of the valuable goods and services provided by a healthy ocean.



Acronyms and abbreviations

ABMT	Area Based Management Tools
ABNJ	Areas beyond national jurisdiction
ACEN	African Circular Economy Network
AFCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AR6	Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC
AU	African Union
BBNJ	Biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction
BCC	Benguela Current Commission
CANCO	Community Action for Nature Conservation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCLME	Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem
CLI	Collective Leadership Institute
CMA	Community Managed Areas
COBSEA	Coordinating Body of the Seas of East Asia
COP	Conference of the parties
CORDIO	Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean
CoSMoS	Collaborative Systems Mapping of Sustainable Pathways
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (South Africa)
CTF	Climate Trust Funds
FAD	Fish aggregating device
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (South Africa)
DG-MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
EAC	East African Community
EBSA	Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas
ECP	Early Career Professional
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
ESG	Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance
EU	European Union
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEOMAR	Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel
GERICS	Climate Service Center Germany
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GOAP	Global Ocean Accounts Partnership
GOBI	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative
HUDEFO	Human Dignity and Environment Care Foundation
IBA	Important Bird Area
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IDDRI	Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
IMS	Information Management Strategy
IOC / COI	Indian Ocean Commission / La Commission de l'océan Indien
IOCARIBE	IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
IOC-UNESCO	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission — The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IOI-SA	International Ocean Institute — Southern Africa
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change

IRD	French Research Institute for Sustainable Development
ISA	International Seabed Authority
ISSB	International Sustainability Standards Board
ISBE	Inclusive Sustainable Blue Economy
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUU Fishing	Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
KMFRI	Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LMMA	Locally Managed Marine Areas
LME	Large marine ecosystems
MCS	Monitoring, control, and surveillance
MLR	Marine Living Resources
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MRF2WIO	Marine Regions Forum in the Western Indian Ocean
MSME	Micro-, small- and medium-enterprises
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NAP	National Action Plan
Nbs	Nature-based Solutions
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NoCaMo	Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Resources of the Northern Mozambique Channel
OCEAN	Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature
OECM	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organizations
RIFS	Research Institute for Sustainability
ROGS	Regional Ocean Governance Strategy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SACCOS	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOA	Sustainable Ocean Alliance
SOI	Sustainable Ocean Initiative
SOP	Sustainable Ocean Plan
SWAM	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
SWIOTUNA	South West Indian Ocean Tuna Forum
TAFIRI	Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute
TMG	TMG – ThinkTank for Sustainability
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEPFI	United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAid	United States Agency for International Development
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WIO	Western Indian Ocean
WIO-ECRN	Western Indian Ocean – Early Career Research Network (WIOMSA)
WIOMPAN	Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Network
WIOMSA	Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association
WIOSAP	Western Indian Ocean Strategic Action Plan
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

List of the organisations represented at the Marine Regions Forum 2023

Abidjan Convention Secretariat
African Circular Economy Network (ACEN)
African Reflection Foundation, Tanzania
African Union Commission
Agent du Ministère de l'Agriculture, Comoros
AIDE / WILDOCEAN, Comoros
Allen Institute for AI (AI2)
Association pour la Protection de l'Environnement aux Comores (APEC)
Benguela Current Convention
BirdLife International
Blue Action Fund
Cartagena Convention
Chumbe Island Coral Park (CHICOP)
Collaborative Centre for Sustainable Production and Consumption, Mauritius
Collective Leadership Institute
Commission de l'Océan Indien (IOC)
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
Community Action for Nature Conservation (CANCO)
CORDIO East Africa
Department of Environment, Zanzibar
Department of Foreign Affairs, Seychelles
Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, South Africa
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
East African Community (EAC)
Eduardo Mondlane University
European Commission
European Union Embassy in Tanzania
Fauna & Flora International
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
French Biodiversity Agency (OFB)
Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP)
Global Ocean Trust
Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon
Human Dignity and Environment Care Foundation (HUDEFO)
Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), South Africa
Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO)
International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF)
International Ocean Institute - Southern Africa (IOI-SA)
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) — International, Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa
IUCN — Eastern and Southern Africa
Kenya International Boundaries Office
Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI)
Mafia Island Marine Park
Marine Stewardship Council
Mauritius Oceanographic Institute
Mihari
Ministère du Cadre de Vie et des Transports, Benin
Ministério da Terra e Ambiente, Mozambique

Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, Seychelles
Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Zanzibar
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Somalia
Ministry of Environment, Ecology, Sea and Forests, Madagascar
Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Climate Change, Seychelles
Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Mauritius
Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Madagascar
Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy, Seychelles
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanzania
Ministry of Lands and Housing, Seychelles
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania
Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania
Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Mozambique
Nairobi Convention Secretariat
National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya
National Environment Management Council (NEMC), Tanzania
National Environment Tribunal, Kenya
Nature Seychelles
Nelson Mandela University
Ocean Community Empowerment and Nature (OCEAN)
Pan African Vision for the Environment (PAVE)
Plastics South Africa
Port Management of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA)
ProAzul
Région Réunion
Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS)
Seychelles Fishing Authority
Seychelles Ocean Agency/Authority
Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority (SPGA)
South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA)
South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)
South West Indian Ocean Tuna Forum (SWIOTUNA)
Southern African Development Community (SADC)
Southern Highlands Shipping & Consultancy
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Advisory Unit at the Office of the President, Ghana
Sustainable Ocean Alliance, Cameroon
Tanzania Biodiversity Organisation
Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI)
Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC)
TMG — ThinkTank for Sustainability (TMG)
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United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
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United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) — Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
University of Comoros
University of Dar es Salaam
University of Lome
Vice President's Office, Tanzania
Western Indian Ocean Early Career Scientists Network (WIO-ECSN)
Western Indian Ocean Mangroves Network
Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)
Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
World Bank
World Ocean Council
World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)

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