

Coastal Cities of the Western Indian Ocean Region and the Blue Economy

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Abstract

This paper is a result of the Nairobi Convention Nineth Conference of Parties that recommended a partnership with UN-Habitat to address the environmental challenges and opportunities posed by rapid urbanization, especially of coastal cities in the WIO region. It discusses three reports produced as a result of studies commissioned by WIOMSA, in collaboration with UN-Habitat in response to Decision CP.9/9 and 9/13. It is hoped that the reports can provide a useful foundation or supplement to blue economy planning and programming in WIO cities. The study acknowledges the potential future growth of other blue economy sectors such as marine biotechnology, renewable energy, and resource extraction, but the recommendations are intentionally focused on blue economy sectors and themes which are currently most prominent across WIO coastal cities. In achieving the conventions strategies and integrating the new urban agenda including urban spatial planning processes and consider integrating marine natural capital, the report recommends.

- Helping the parties enhance their operational environment to maximise gains in BE in WIO cities
- WIOMSA, the Secretariat and other regional partners strengthen and integrate BE governance and planning in waterfront development, ports, and maritime trade for the WIO region.
- An effort by the parties to offer Blue Economy technical assistance to local authority and county governments in the region and integrating Coastal Cities in BE.
- *Blue Economy Governance and Planning* - Formalize local MSP in legislation and allow local governments to plan 5km into the ocean, establishing coordinated city structures for BE planning.
- *Ports and Maritime Trade* - Identify additional supply chain opportunities (processing, other value addition activities) economically proximate to existing port activities.
- *Tourism* - Develop and promote city region tourist strategies, promoting local assets, local communities, connecting cities and beach resorts, and coordinating between regional tourist locations.
- *Fishing* - Incentivize bulk buyers in WIO cities to buy local seafood produce. E.g., restaurants that can showcase local produce.
- *Waterfront Development* - Public-private partnerships (PPP) to facilitate waterfront development, including multiple area market analysis, land use assessment, financing, and/or operations.
- *Operational Environment* - City mapping of circular economy opportunities including livelihood opportunities for local communities; transportation planning and infrastructure, innovative plastic waste solutions; resilient and anticipatory planning, and systematic interventions with respect to recycling infrastructure and processes. Creation of city circular economy strategy.

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