

GIZ Opening statement; Contracting Parties (Heads of Delegation meeting)

Distinguished delegates, honoured guests, esteemed colleagues, good morning.

On behalf the German Development Cooperation and the Western Indian Ocean Governance Initiative, I extend warm greeting to you all. I would also like to convey regards from our, Project Manager, Mr. Robin Farrington, who unfortunately could not join us due to critical deliberations on new projects at our headquarters in Germany. However, he sends his best wishes for a successful and productive meeting.

We deeply appreciate the hospitality of our hosts, the Government of Madagascar. It is an honor to convene in this remarkable region, celebrated for its rich biodiversity and vital coastal and marine ecosystems.

Over the past few days, we have witnessed the profound impact of collaboration. The complexities of fostering a sustainable Blue Economy and enhancing ocean governance demand a united and cooperative approach.

In this spirit, we would like to extend our most heartfelt gratitude to all the partners, public and private, all the stakeholders and most importantly, all the Governments, through their focal points present. Your unwavering support and collaboration have been instrumental in advancing our shared vision. It is not just your involvement that is valued, but the passion and commitment you bring. Your contributions have been the driving force behind our achievements as the Nairobi Convention, and it is through your efforts that we have made remarkable strides.

Each of us has shown an extraordinary level of commitment to our cause. Your insights, expertise, and resources has enhanced the realization of all our that we have set out to do so far. We are deeply humbled and honored to have you as our partners. Without your dedication, the progress made by the convention, would not have been possible. We look forward to continuing this journey with you to create lasting positive change.

At GIZ, we remain deeply committed to supporting regional collaboration, we strive to enhance and strengthen institutional capacities, and engage communities effectively. By working together, we can develop and implement solutions that preserve our ecosystems while promoting socio-economic advancement and realizing impact on the ground.

In conclusion, let us remember that the strength of our impact lies in our collective action. The theme of this event, *'Regional Collaboration for a Sustainable Blue Economy: Enhancing Ocean Governance in the Western Indian Ocean,'* underscores the urgent need for unified efforts. The challenges we face are vast and complex, requiring the combined strength, insights, and commitment of all stakeholders in this region. From GIZ, we pledge our commitment for collaborative action. **Thank you.**