

## **Ocean Acidification - a hidden risk to sustainable development in the Western Indian Ocean**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is a new response to past COP decisions, CP.9/9 (Climate change adaptation and mitigation), to urge Contracting Parties to address the impact of ocean acidification (OA), including through capacity development and the enhancement of scientific cooperation in partnership with research and academic institutions, regional monitoring and adaptation activities. The paper seeks to address the lack of data coverage in the Indian Ocean and lack of capacity of WIO scientists to address ocean acidification. It highlights the need for political support for further development, expansion, and enhancement of this area of research in the region. Particularly the paper proposes the following on OA in the WIO;

- Promotion of a national and regional solution-oriented research strategy including implementation of adaptation strategies to mitigate impacts of OA.
- Communication on OA and the threat its poses to the public through outreach and educational programmes. The use of United Nations Policy Brief on OA is proposed as a platform for promotion of National Action Plans formulation, regional and local policies development, and general awareness creation on OA.
- Research, knowledge sharing and transfer, and capacity development on OA to inform development and implementation of efficient adaptation strategies to minimize the impact of OA.

The following recommendations are made based on the background on OA in the WIO given.

- Contracting Parties are urged to develop and implement mitigation and adaptation solutions to address and minimize impacts of OA as part of their wider climate change intervention strategies including prioritizing solution-oriented OA research to help their countries achieve SDG target 14.3, which aims at minimizing the impacts of OA.
- The Secretariat working with WIOMSA and other partners support the development of a regional strategy for capacity building bringing together scientists, policy makers and ocean users.
- The Nairobi Convention Secretariat working with partners establish a community of practice in the WIO focused on OA.